A STUDY OF THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS
OF EXECUTIVE TENSION

by

William J. Forristall

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background and Approach

Progress or change has been, and is, an inevitable force in the
evolution of the cultures of mankind. It is similar to a geometric
progression. For thousands of years, man's progress was slow, however,
for the past few hundred years, the tempo of human evolution has been
accelerating almost uncontrollably. Today, at least for the industrial
nations of the world, and especially for America, the rate of change
has reached fantastic and sometimes frightening proportions. Indeed,
as Warren Bennis states, the pace has accelerated so much in recent
years that "No exaggeration, no hyperbole, no outrage can realistically
describe the extent and pace of change. . . . In fact, only the exag-
gerations appear to be true."[1]

Change can be a stimulant, but it also creates uncertainty.
And, uncertainty usually generates a state of tension or unrest among
all elements of the social system. The world today is fraught with
war, crises, pressures and tension. In America many of our organiza-
tions, public, private, and religious are faced with conflict, strife
and dissension. Long cherished traditions are being challenged and
there are instances where anarchy seems imminent.

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[1]Alvin Toffler, "Future Shock," _Playboy_, Vol. XVII, (February,
1970), p. 97, quoting Warren Bennis.

The maelstrom of change is seething all around us. Society is
becoming increasingly mobile or rootless, and feelings of impermanence
heighten tension. Society has become affluent and urbanized. We have
the suburbs and the ghettos, race problems, pollution, massive trans-
portation problems, inflation, etc., etc. Many of our young, espe-
cially the college students are disenchanted, possibly even despondent.
They rightly decry the social wrongs, injustices and hypocricy. They
feel that the "establishment" has badly mismanaged the growth of our
society. As Peter Drucker states:

> The political matrix of social and economic life is
> changing fast. Today's society and polity are pluralistic.
> Every single social task of importance today is entrusted
> to a large institution organized for perpetuity and run by
> managers. Where the assumptions that govern what we ex-
> pect and see are still those of the individualistic society
> of eighteenth-century liberal theory, the reality that
> governs our behavior is that of organized, indeed over-
> organized, power concentrations.
>
> Yet, we are also approaching a turning point in this
> trend. Everywhere there is rapid disenchantment with the
> biggest and fastest-growing of these institutions, modern
> government, as well as cynicism regarding its ability to
> perform. We are becoming equally critical of other organ-
> ized institutions; revolt is occurring simultaneously in
> the Catholic Church and the big university. The young
> everywhere are, indeed, rejecting all institutions with
> equal hostility.[1]

Thus, today's managers/executives face an enormous challenge.
They not only have to solve the normal day-to-day organizational prob-
lems, they must confront and cope with the wide array of socio-economic
problems, present and future, that are being generated by the ever-
accelerating rate of technological change. And, in view of the

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[1]Peter F. Drucker, The Age of Discontinuity (New York: Harper &
Row, Publishers, 1969), pp. x-xi.

magnitude of these problems, it is imperative that the executives per-
form their duties as effectively as humanly possible. For as Professor
Claude S. George, Jr. says:

> Management is at one and the same time the determiner
> of our economic progress, the employer of our educated, the
> amasser of our resources, the guide for our effective
> government, the strength of our national defense, and the
> molder of our society. It is the central core of our na-
> tional as well as personal activities, and the way we
> manage ourselves and our institutions reflects with
> alarming clarity what we and our society will become.[1]

However, the reaction to this clarity of thought, counter to the almost
chaotic cynicism of a large segment of the public, can be clearly seen
to involve an almost unpredictable lack of control over human reaction
and thus, the resulting human behavior.

There are approximately six recognized schools or approaches to
the study of management. Each has a large number of advocates, espe-
cially among the university ranks, and this, has resulted in much con-
fusion as to what management and its theory is, and how it should be
practiced. Thus Harold Koontz has called the situation "the management
theory jungle."[2]

Regardless of which school one belongs to, it is generally agreed
upon that management does, to a large extent, involve getting things
done through, and with, people. It is therefore axiomatic that every
managerial decision has human behavioral consequences. In view of

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[1]Claude S. George, Jr., The History of Management Thought
(Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 1.

[2]Harold Koontz and Cyril O'Donnell, Principles of Management
(3d ed.: New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1964), p. 26.

this, McGregor stated, in his book The Human Side of Enterprise, that "successful management depends -- not alone, but significantly upon the ability to predict and control human behavior."[1] This is a concept which has validity only if you understand McGregor to mean that successful management requires the ability to positively affect and/or to shape human behavior.

In managing the human and material resources to attain the objectives of an enterprise, it can be said that the executive's main function is to make decisions on how to operate and maintain the organization. He must or should consider how these decisions will affect not only his superiors, peers and subordinates, but also society. These decisions are made in consideration of many influences, constraints and uncontrollable factors and rarely are these decisions rendered without emotion of some kind. Thus, the executive is subject to many and varied pressures or stresses.

Tension is recognized as being the result of stress and, as implied above, its causative factors are myriad. Indeed, stress is ubiquitous -- it is an inescapable and basic part of daily living, and so too, then, is tension. This is not to say, however, that all tension is bad. There is both healthy and unhealthy tension, and some tension is required to sustain life, to respond to emergencies, to be creative, to be productive. Theodore Irwin, editor of the book What the Executive Should Know About Tensions, has cited some excellent examples of healthy tension:

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[1]Douglas McGregor, The Human Side of Enterprise (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1960), p. 4.

We all experience normal suppressed excitement, the kind that comes when we make a big sale, a grandchild is born, or we face a crucial meeting with someone important to us. In this state our body is mobilized, adrenalin pours into the blood system, our liver discharges its energy-giving sugar, the nervous system is alerted, our heartbeat and blood pressure increase. We're keyed up, but this is a healthy tension.

Such tension is actually a desirable ingredient, stimulating activity. If properly channeled, it prods an executive to constructive creative effort. People of action thrive on a certain amount of tension. One man's stress is another man's motivation.

In fact, we need some tensions to stay alive. A jelly fish is completely relaxed but in no shape to dodge a speeding car. Suppose you're home and taking it easy. The phone rings and you're told your son has been in an automobile crash. Immediately you tense up, marshall your energies and go out to take care of your son. Tension is thus a sort of fire-alarm, the sensations and emotions you feel when your body mobilizes to overcome a threat. It can also be enjoyable, as when you watch an exciting football game.[1]

Excessive or unhealthy tension, however, does not have such beneficial effects and should be avoided whenever possible. In addressing unhealthy tension Irwin states:

Excessive and unpleasant tensions . . . are damaging when your overmobilized body refuses to return to normal. Your blood pressure remains too high, drum-taut muscles stay cramped, your judgement is impaired and you may verge on panic. You're all wound up with no place to go.

The time to watch out is when tensions come frequently, shake us severely and persist. Even though there's no adequate threat, we're on edge, can't reason things out or control our feelings as we do when rested and in good condition.

Diverse factors may be at the root of harmful extreme tensions, particularly among executives. Nobody is more victimized than the average businessman, whose day

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[1]Theodore Irwin, "The Tension Phenomenon: An Occupational Hazard," What the Executive Should Know About Tensions, ed. Theodore Irwin (Larchmont, N.Y.: American Research Council, 1966), p. 4.

is usually a merry-go-round of meeting deadlines, making decisions, dealing with difficult people (who have their own worries) and tackling a hundred and one unforeseen problems. He works under the pressures of time, responsibility, fear of criticism and fear of failure.[1]

Health experts recognize that both the physical and mental performance of man are affected by tension, be it healthy or unhealthy tension. They are also agreed that excessive or unhealthy tension has a corrosive or injurious effect on him. Thus excessive tension is viewed as a performance constraint that the executive must be able to recognize and one with which he must be able to cope if he is to maximize his effectiveness.

The approach to this study will primarily focus on the fact and the effect of excessive tension -- perhaps its understatement in current management theory -- and certainly its pivotal impact upon management effectiveness.

Purpose and Scope

It has been stated that the large organizations/corporations, private and public, are the dominant institutions of our society. It has also been stated that the way we manage ourselves and our institutions reflects what our society will become. We have talked about the great challenges that face today's management, i.e., the executives. The geometric acceleration of technical change has created socio-economic problems of major impact and there is even indication that these will pale in significance to the problems of the near future. How will our institutional leaders, the executives, act, react and manage these stressful situations?

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[1] Ibid., pp. 4-5.

Organizational behavior is the behavior of individuals and there are many factors that affect and/or motivate individuals and their performance or productivity. However, it is generally agreed upon that the atmosphere of the executive hierarchy of an organization, to a large extent, affects and/or determines the overall organizational climate and subsequently the level of organizational effectiveness. Therefore, the executive's failure to cope with and overcome excessive or unhealthy tension is viewed as a major problem that can have multiplicative effects. It can have adverse effects on himself, his family, his superiors and peers, his subordinates, his organization, and even on society. Therefore, top management too must cope with and overcome excessive tension or stress-generating situations.

The purpose of this paper, then, is to examine the problem of excessive tension in relation to the executive. Excessive tension is considered to be one of the major problems, and also an accelerating one, that the executive must face, and it is a problem that apparently many executives know little about.

Excessive tension can have a significant impact on an executive's personality and in turn, as previously stated, on his organization's climate and ultimately on organizational effectiveness. McGregor's viewpoint is widely supported and it is believed that truly successful management will result only if the executives, individually and collectively, improve their ability to understand and positively affect human behavior. Logically, this ability can be viewed as being largely dependent upon each executive's degree of success in confronting and coping with his personal problems of unhealthy tension.

Since excessive tension can have adverse effects on an executive, on his organization's climate and ultimately on organizational effectiveness, what can the executive and top management do to control or reduce tension so as to promote and maintain a healthy psychological climate within the organization? This is the research question to be answered. To fully explore this question, it is believed that the following subsidiary questions must also be investigated in turn:

1. What is the magnitude of excessive tension?

2. What is the relationship of stress to tension?

3. Are there recognized stages or degrees of tension?

4. What are the initial symptoms of tension?

5. What are the major causes (sources) and effects of unhealthy executive tension?

In attempting to answer the research question, Chapter II will set the stage. Some common myths regarding executive tension will be exploded. In addition the magnitude of excessive tension among the executive ranks will be described. And, the executive will be observed as "the man in the middle," caught between his own needs and demands and those of his job, family, friends, and society. Chapter III will explain the nature of tension. Here the dimensions of tension, the relationship of stress to tension, and the initial symptoms of tension will be described. To complete setting the stage for exploring the research question, and to re-emphasize the complexity and circular relationships involved in the problem of executive tension, Chapter IV will contrast the executive and the organization as sub-sets of the social system and will point out the potential areas of conflict that can generate tension. Chapter V will describe the causes (or sources) of executive tension

within the framework of the social system and Chapter VI, focusing primarily on the managerial implications, will describe the behavioral, emotional and physical effects of excessive executive tension. Finally, in the concluding chapter, after a brief review, some individual and organizational methods for tension control will be suggested.

Limitations

Executive tension has been a cause of deep and widespread concern for many years to most men in management.[1] It was a hidden and rarely discussed problem prior to the mid 1950's; and although some concern has been evidenced since that time in published material, it is still a relatively hidden and rarely discussed problem.

Considerably more research has been conducted and more information is available regarding the mental health of non-executives, especially in the mass production industries. Indeed, there are virtually hundreds of books and more articles on all aspects of industrial psychology -- but relatively little material on the irrationality and tension problems of the executive. It is clear that the executives and the men who write for or about them have ignored these topics and have focused on the rational aspect of executive life.

This leads on to wonder why there has been such a paucity of research conducted on the mental health of executives. Bryant and Schoderbek theorize that the answer is probably due to the propensity of executives to underwrite investigations of productivity, confined to

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[1]Theodore Irwin (ed.), What the Executive Should Know About Tensions, Foreword by Edward Gottlieb (Larchmont, N.Y.: American Research Council, 1966), p. xi.

production employees, rather than hazard the scrutiny of the "sacrosanct" ranks of the managers themselves.[1] Mason Haire suggests that:

> . . . the superior, at any level, is in the position he is because of the degree of success he has had in dealing with others. He is what he is because of the technique of human relations. Since his success and security depend on them, it engenders too much anxiety for him to question whether or not the techniques he used in dealing with others are the best possible. To challenge them is to challenge the foundations on which his present success is built.[2]

And Dr. Allan Schoonmaker believes that:

> Executives and writers alike have ignored anxiety and its effects for the same reason that most other people ignore the subject. It is human nature to want to believe that we are rational men. We all want to believe this, but the desire is especially strong among executives. Their whole culture and their system of values emphasize rationality and minimize emotions. Executives are expected to ignore and control their own feelings and are ashamed to admit that they can't do it. They therefore deny their own feelings or try to ignore them.[3]

Thus, this paper has been largely restricted to the relatively small amount of secondary source information that has been published since the mid 1950's. However, during the course of this study, the subject of tension was discussed with close to one hundred executives from private corporations, the federal government, the military and the Catholic Church, and the ideas and opinions received from these people were most enlightening.

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[1] Lynn Bryant and Peter Schoderbek, "Executive Dropout," *Personnel Administration*, Vol. XXXI (September-October, 1968), p. 47.

[2] Mason Haire, *Psychology in Management* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1956), pp. 8-9.

[3] Alan N. Schoonmaker, *Anxiety and the Executive* (American Management Association, Inc., 1969), pp. 14-15.

In addition, this paper does not pretend to be predicated on expertise in the fields of medicine, psychology or human behavior. It is written by a layman in language that, hopefully, will be easily understood by the lay manager/management student.

Lastly, the complexity of man as a psychological being must be remembered. The actual causes and effects of tension and human behavior are practically infinite and difficult to describe. There is considerable overlap, and often the relationships are interrelated and/or circular. Tension is the effect of many variables and what is a stressful situation for one can be an enjoyable experience for another.

Therefore, in view of the limitations above, and recognizing the dual constraints of time and the realistic expectations of a study of this scope, this paper will be primarily a macro-analysis focusing on the negative aspects of executive tension. And although general in nature, it is hoped that it will arouse, in the reader, the desire for further study of himself and his institutional relations.

Definitions

At this point, the basic terms of "stress" and "tension" should be defined since authors writing in this field frequently give them different meanings. In addition, although the terms "stress" and "tension" are widely used within the psychological frame of reference or the human behavior field, most standard dictionaries refer mainly to the mechanical and physical definitions. Psychological dictionaries are also somewhat limited in their definitions and some also, as do the popular authors, use the terms interchangeably.

David Ewing, associate editor of the Harvard Business Review,
does not specifically define the terms in his book, The Managerial Mind,
but he does use the terms "stress," "strain" and "tension" inter-
changeably.[1] Torrance uses the word "stress" to describe a state of
tension, but he makes no attempt to differentiate between the event and
the state.[2]

Costello and Zalkind are much more definitive. Recognizing that
the word "stress" is used to refer to both an external event and to an
internal state, they use the term "stressor" for the event and "tension"
for the internal state of anxiety, conflict or frustration. A stressor
is then defined as a "disturbance or strain in the environment" and it
encompasses such events as: obstacles to goals; conflicting, un-
reasonable, exacting or incompatible demands, role ambiguities, etc.
Also included as stressors are such other things as: noise, uncomfortable
temperatures, deprivation of physical needs and taxing working conditions.
Thus, environmental stressors are viewed as producing both physical and
psychological tension states in the individual which may either help or
hinder him in his goal striving efforts.[3]

While most standard dictionaries restrict the definitions of
"stress" and "tension" to mainly mechanical or physical frames of

[1] David W. Ewing, The Managerial Mind (London: The Free Press
of Glencoe, Collier-MacMillan Limited, 1964), pp. 47-62.

[2] Paul E. Torrance, Constructive Behavior: Stress, Personality
and Mental Health (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc.,
1965), p. 18.

[3] Timothy W. Costello and Sheldon S. Zalkind (eds.), Psychology
in Administration: A Research Orientation, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.:
Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 128.

reference, The American College Dictionary does recognize the psycho-
logical frame of reference in their definition of "tension." Its
definition states in part that tension is: ". . . mental or emotional
strain; strong intellectual effort; intense suppressed excite-
ment. . . ."[1] Of course, the psychological dictionary of English and
English gives a much more precise and useful definition. They define
"stress" and "tension" as follows:

> Stress: a force, applied to a system sufficient to
> cause strain or distortion in the system or, when
> very great, to alter it into a new form. The term
> may be restricted to physical force and physical
> systems, or extended to psychological forces and
> systems.
>
> Tension: . . . 3. a condition of the organism
> marked by unrest or uneasiness by partly restrained
> restless activity, by pressure to act (but with no
> necessary implication of directed action). 4. an
> emotional state resulting when needs are unsatisfied
> or goal-directed behavior is blocked.[2]

The simple working definition for this paper, then, is that
tension is the body's physical and mental reaction to a stress situation,
i.e., tension is the by-product of stress. And the more detailed working
definitions are as follows:

> Stressor: an external event, a stress situation,
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> that is perceived consciously or unconsciously, to
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> be a threat, to involve a conflict, or to be a
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> blockage to a goal.

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[1]The American College Dictionary, ed. C. L. Barnhardt (New York:
Random House, 1966), p. 1248.

[2]Horace B. English and Ava Champney English, A Comprehensive
Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms (New York:
Longmans, Green & Co., 1958), p. 529.

Tension: an emotional state of arousal or unrest
that is generally manifested by feelings of anxiety,
conflict or frustration.

CHAPTER II

PERSPECTIVE

Common Myths

The popular concept of the modern executive appears to be that
he is a cold, calculating individual who is overworked, overfed, over-
demanding and also one who is definitely prone to develop stress
disease. He is stereotyped as a man who is exhausted, tense, dis-
tressed, frequently frustrated, ulcer ridden and "seemingly doomed to
die of a stroke or a heart attack years ahead of his time."[1]

This "typical" picture is, of course, a caricature and for the
most part, utter nonsense. Probably this concept is the result of
movies and television shows which all too often portray the executive
as a human dynamo who, as he is carrying on a three-way telephone con-
versation and simultaneously dictating to a couple of beautiful, ef-
ficient secretaries, is intermittently swallowing various types of pills
or large doses of bicarbonate of soda.

Going from fantasy to reality, what are the facts about executive
health? Doctor Harry J. Johnson of the Life Extension Foundation states
that:

> In matters of health the executive is no worse off
> than any other occupational segment of the population.
> As a matter of fact, the executive even has a slight edge

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[1] Harry J. Johnson, Keeping Fit in Your Executive Job (American
Management Association, Inc.: The Haddon Craftsmen, Inc., 1962), p. 7.

in health over others, notably in life expectancy. It is
not by coincidence or chance that life insurance companies
generally consider him a preferred risk. Executives are
not liquidating themselves prematurely. They are at
least an average healthy group.[1]

Many people, including executives themselves, assume that ulcers

and heart disease are common occupational hazards resulting from the

tensions of an executive position. This is a false assumption according

to Dr. William P. Shepard, former medical director of the Metropolitan

Life Insurance Company, who said:

> Much has been said and written about the stress and
> strain of being an executive, the inference being that it
> is overwork that causes the ulcer or the heart attack.
> There is no discernable occupational hazard connected
> with the job of being an executive. Studies fail to show
> that the executive dies younger or suffers many more or many
> different impairments than his fellow workers.[2]

It is also popularly believed that executives are completely

rational, logical thinking men who have learned to make objective de-

cisions based solely on the facts, and who are generally not influenced

by their own emotions. Unfortunately, executives are not "supermen."

While there is much truth in the popular conception of the executive, it

is certainly an incomplete and misleading one, and in some cases a very

dangerous assumption. Executives are as human as the next man and they

cannot completely control or ignore their emotions. Schoonmaker has

expressed the situation very lucidly:

> Because of their basic character and training, executives
> are more rational than most men, and they do have better con-
> trol over their emotions. But this control is certainly not
> complete. Sometimes they can't understand their emotions;
> sometimes their emotions are too powerful to control, and

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Ibid., p. 9.

then they act as emotionally and irrationally as other
men. Some executives kill themselves by driving care-
lessly; others commit slow suicide by drinking, smoking,
or eating too much. Many buy cars and homes that they
don't need, and can't afford, in a frantic and obviously
irrational struggle for prestige. Many are so busy
'getting ahead' that they ruin their marriages and lose
contact with their children.[1]

The Magnitude of Executive Tension

While it is an actuarial fact that the executive is not doomed to

expire at a premature age due to some form of stress disease, this does

not mean that many executives do not suffer from tension. Many live

long lives in spite of the effects of tension!

The exact magnitude of the problem of unhealthy executive tension

is not really known today. However, there are many indications that the

problem is one of significant dimension. In 1959, the Life Extension

Foundation conducted a survey of some 6,000 executives from 179 companies

throughout the nation. The results showed that 13.3 per cent of the exec-

utives declared that they were working under excessive tension.[2] And, it

can be assumed that this figure is on the conservative side since many

people do not even know when they are suffering from tension. Dr. Edmund

Jacobson, director of the Laboratory for Clinical Physiology, Chicago and

the Jacobson Clinic states that: "most people do not know whether they

are tense or not and many do not care until symptoms arise. Even then,

with symptoms from excessive tension, there are some who deny being tense."[3]

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[1]Schoonmaker, Anxiety. . ., p. 14.

[2]Life Extension Foundation, Report of a Survey on Executive
Tension in Business (New York: Life Extension Foundation, /1959/), p. 10.

[3]Edmund Jacobson, Tension Control for Businessmen (New York:
McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1963), p. 35.

Today, in the era of the "conglomerates" there is every indication
that the merger "fever" is accentuating the problem of executive tension
and is taking its toll among the executive ranks. Susan Margetts of
Duns Review reports that:

> The executive of a large corporation, who was once
> the most secure of men, now has, perhaps, the riskiest
> of all jobs. The laborer has the union to protect him --
> the corporate executive has no way of protecting his job
> when his company merges or is taken over. And, since
> most mergers bring duplication of positions, security is
> tenuous.[1]

As previously stated, the problem of tension was discussed with
close to one hundred executives during the course of this study. These
executives, while primarily from middle management positions, did cover
a wide range of positions from the private, public and religious sectors.
And although it can be argued that these people do not comprise a "pure
sample," their ideas, opinions and remarks are considered to be rele-
vant, at least as an indicator that tension is a major problem among the
executive ranks. No formal questionnaires were used, nor were any
statistics compiled, but the following points, which illustrate the ex-
istence of the problem, were made with alarming consistency: (1) "people
problems" were a big source of worry and consumed too much of the work
day; (2) the organization expected too much and was really insincere in
their concern for people; (3) each year the job became more of a
"ratrace"; (4) superiors were too often cold, aloof and unreasonable;
(5) there were too many unnecessary, ridiculous or hypocritical rules;
(6) the organization seethed with political intrigue; (7) staff personnel
wielded too much power and influence.

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[1]Susan Margetts, "Executives: Taut, Tense, Cracking Up," Duns
Review, Vol. 93 (March, 1969), p. 55.

Perhaps the major reason that the magnitude of executive tension cannot be specifically defined is the organization's attitude towards tension. Jonathan Slesinger has observed that:

> Most companies operate with a laissez-faire attitude toward the management and control of stress. As a result, no systematic machinery exists for measuring the presence, location, intensity, and timing of stress in the system. Thus, although individualistic adaptions are often apparent to outside observers, the system members who are adapting are frequently unaware of the source or the nature of stress.[1]

Understanding that the magnitude of unhealthy executive tension is nebulous, and recognizing the inherent difficulty of measuring it, it is, nevertheless, considered to be a major problem. There is also reason to believe that tension control could be the major problem facing the executives and the organizations today. Excessive tension has destructive tendencies, therefore the executives and the organizations must learn to manage its controllable factors. Who knows the costs of poor decisions made by executives who are suffering from excessive tension? And, how many poor decisions could have been averted had the executives known the facts about tension? One of the most significant facts about excessive tension is that much of it is completely unnecessary.

The Man In The Middle

Sayles and Strauss refer to the manager as the "man in the middle" because he is subject to the endless conflicting demands, expectations and loyalties between his work group, of which he is the leader, and the

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[1]Jonathan A. Slesinger and Earnest Harburg, "The Management of Executive Stress in a Complex Organization," Paper read before the meeting of the American Sociological Association, Washington, D.C., August, 1962.

higher management group, of which he is a representative.[1] This paper

also envisions the executive as the "man in the middle" -- but expands

the concept. The executive is considered to be at the center of a

system where he is subject to the conflicting demands, expectations,

loyalties, etc., of his own personality, his family, his organization

and work groups and society at large. Thus, the executive is viewed

as being subject not only to the hazards of personality maladjustments,

but to the equally, and perhaps more stressful strains of his demanding

job, family and societal affiliations.

Many writers have frequently suggested that a large part of

every executive's life can be described as a continuous struggle to

escape the possibilities of being fired or of failing and thus losing

stature in the eyes of his family and associates. William E. Henry de-

picts the executive as apprehensive and fearful of failure and has ob-

served:

> If one is continually active and always trying to solve pro-
> lems . . . any inability to do so successfully may well
> result in feelings of frustration. This seems to be true
> of the executives. In spite of their firmness of character
> and their drive to activity, they also harbor a rather
> pervasive feeling that they may not really succeed and be
> able to do the things they want to do.[2]

There is certainly a vivid portrayal of a "man in the middle." It

strongly suggests the need to explore the nature of his tension.

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[1]Leonard R. Sayles and George Strauss, Human Behavior in Organi-
zations (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 353.

[2]Edgar W. Vinake et al., Dimensions of Social Psychology
(Chicago: Scott, Foresman, and Co., 1964), pp. 239-240.

CHAPTER III

THE NATURE OF EXECUTIVE TENSION

Relationship of Stress to Tension

As a rule, cause and effect relationships are not ambiguous.
They usually occur in a clear, identifiable sequence and are easily
separated for analysis. Stress and tension, however, are not so easily
defined. The situation is analogous to the familiar dilemma of, "Which
came first -- the chicken or the egg?"

As herein defined, tension is a by-product of stress. Generally,
many conditions or stressors can be clearly identified as the cause and
tension the effect, but the process is frequently a circular one, with
the effect of tension becoming a cause for even greater tension. For
example, a man perceives that he is not progressing fast enough in his
career, and he drinks to reduce his tension, but he is passed over for
promotion because of his intemperance, and he becomes still more tense.

Understanding that the process is sometimes a "vicious circle,"
the cause and effect relationships between stress and tension can be
generally described. Stressors, which are conditions, events or
happenings in the environment, be they perceived, imagined or actual,
exert an influence on an individual which results in a state of psy-
chological uneasiness or emotional unrest called tension. This tension,
which can be a conscious or unconscious experience, is unpleasant or
painful to the individual and he tries to escape from it, usually by

taking some sort of defensive action. Many times this defensive re-
action causes a change in one or more of the environmental factors
thereby becoming a new or more powerful stressor which triggers the
process anew.

Thus, the stress/tension cycle can be viewed as a control mech-
anism or a cybernetic system. Kenneth E. Boulding, in describing the
General Systems Theory, states that this type of system could be named
"the level of the thermostat."[1] He goes on to say that:

> . . . This differs from the simple stable equilibrium
> system mainly in the fact that the transmission and
> interpretation of information is an essential part of
> the system. As a result of this, the equilibrium
> position is not merely determined by the equations
> of the system, but the system will move to the
> maintenance of any given equilibrium, within limits.[2]

This emphasizes an important point. Each individual has a unique stress
or tension control system. Each system has its limits and it ranges
from low tension tolerance to high tension tolerance. It is imperative
then, that the executive acquires an understanding of his tension ca-
pacity. If he doesn't, he can wear himself out faster than is necessary.
Superior capacities notwithstanding, no man is a superman. Everyone
does have a breaking point, and when this point is reached, physical
and/or psychological problems of a deleterious nature usually emerge.

Dimensions of Tension

The relationship of stress to tension, i.e., the stress/tension

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[1]Kenneth E. Boulding, "General Systems Theory -- The Skeleton of
Science," Management Systems, ed. Peter P. Schoderbek (New York:
John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1967), p. 11.

[2]Ibid.

cycle having been described, an attempt to outline the parameters of tension must be made. But, what is the best way to do this?

It is evident that the subject of tension is a very complex issue at best. The terms used in defining it cover a wide range evidencing considerable disagreement in scientific circles. Attempting to describe tension is, of itself, a frustrating experience. Definitions and theory are conflicting. There is general agreement in the broad sense and disagreement in the narrow sense. The terms are specific and general, ambiguous and non-ambiguous, related and nonrelated --- it all depends on the situation being described. This is due, perhaps, to the fact that the same term can describe an event, a specific emotional feeling, or a broad emotional state which can be manifested by a variety of more specific feelings.

It is not surprising, then, to find that there are many different approaches to the study of tension, many of which are narrow in scope. In addition, much of the material encountered in this research project has presented a bewildering array of emotional experiences and they have been discussed within a variety of frameworks.

In attempting to bring some semblence of order into describing the bewildering and confusing array of emotional experiences and reactions involved, it seems that the subject of tension should first be defined in terms of general dimensions. Viewed from the perspective, tension states appear to have three basic descriptive areas. These are types of tension, intensity of feelings, and the duration of the tension state.

There appear to be at least eight different ways to type tension states and Abe Arkoff, of the University of Hawaii, has developed a particularly excellent and comprehensive set of definitions. It should be noted however, that in his definitions, Arkoff uses the term "anxiety" in lieu of tension:

Objective Versus Nonobjective Anxiety.
     Anxiety is said to be "objective" if it seems commensurate with the threat posed by a situation. This implies that the danger is actually known. . . and that the arousal is proportional to this explicit danger. . . . Sometimes this kind of anxiety is called "normal," "rational" or "realistic."
     By contrast, anxiety is considered "nonobjective" if it is not commensurate with the threat involved in a situation or if the threat is vague or unknown. . . . This kind of anxiety is sometimes called "neurotic," "irrational," and "unrealistic."

Situational Versus General Anxiety.
     Anxiety that occurs only under particular circumstances is called "situational anxiety." . . . This kind of anxiety is sometimes called "bound" because it is tied to certain situations and can be controlled as long as these situations are avoided.
     "General" anxiety . . . pervades the activities of the individual. . . . The person may be unable to relax and unable to feel at ease under any circumstances. . . . sometimes referred to as "free floating."

Acute Versus Chronic Anxiety.
     "Acute" anxiety is sharp and intense. It is relatively sudden in onset. . . Some of us suffer from "anxiety attacks" which are sudden bursts of anxiety that rapidly mount to a peak and then fade away.
     "Chronic" anxiety refers to elevated states of anxiety which have persisted over a long period.

Conscious Versus Unconscious Anxiety.
     When we speak of being anxious or feeling anxious we imply that we are very much aware of our feelings. We feel what we feel even though we may not know why we feel it. In other words, our anxiety is conscious even though our reasons for it may not be.
    . . . .

With varying degrees of success, we learn certain ways
to deal with anxiety. These are sometimes called "defenses"
since we use them to defend ourselves against stress. But
if these patterns of behavior are interferred with in some
way, we are again assaulted by anxiety. Anxiety that is
adequately defended against is sometimes called "unconscious"
anxiety. Anxiety that is not controlled in some way is
called "conscious."[1]

Intensity of feeling is primarily a subjective matter. Attempts
have been made to objectively measure the degree of intensity of the
various tension states, but they have not been very successful.[2] Ap-
parently this is due to the complexity of the subject. There are too
many factors and interrelated variables involved, and in this regard
Lazzarus states, "the point is that no single class of indicators, be-
havioral or physiological, is free from the influence of other
variables."[3] Thus, as a subjective quality, intensity of feeling can
be described only by general terms for "emotional experiences range in
intensity of feeling all the way from the barely noticed tinge of a
momentary mood to the most powerful of passions."[4] Some writers ap-
parently recognize this constraint, treat it as a universally known
fact and make no attempt to define the range of the intensity. However,
many other writers have defined the range of the intensity of feeling
of tension states in such terms as "slight," "moderate," and "severe."[5]

[1]Abe Arkoff, Adjustment and Mental Health (New York: McGraw-
Hill, Inc., 1968), pp. 113-116.

[2]Richard S. Lazzarus, "Stress," International Encyclopedia of
the Social Sciences, ed. David L. Sills, Vol. XV (1968), p. 347.

[3]Ibid.

[4]David Krech and Richard S. Crutchfield, Elements of Psychology
(New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), p. 230.

[5]Costello and Zalkind, Psychology in Administration . . ., p. 156.

However, in view of the complexity of assessing emotions, perhaps it would be better to consider the intensity of feelings in terms of "low" versus "high," "some" versus "a lot" or, better yet, "healthy" versus "unhealthy."

Duration of the tension state refers, of course, to the length of time that an individual experiences the internal tension. In the broadest sense, it could be said that the duration is never-ending since tension is ubiquitous i.e., we are constantly encountering stressors. However, "duration," as used here, refers to the length of time that a tension state is experienced as the result of encountering a specific stress situation. It is of a relative and/or subjective nature like "intensity of feeling" and, therefore, it can only be described in general terms. The terms used most frequently to classify the duration of tension states are "momentary" or "short" and "prolonged."

In summary, we see that the dimensions of tension are paradoxal and complex. There are at least eight related and interrelated ways of describing tension states by type, ranging from an "objective" tension state to an "unconscious" tension state. Intensity of feelings and the duration of the tension state have been shown to be of a subjective and relative nature and are, at once, both simple and difficult to define.

Symptoms of Tension

Man cannot defend himself against an enemy if he does not know how to recognize him. The executive, then, should become more familiar

with his "early warning system" so that he will be able to cope more effectively with the tension phenomena.

As previously stated, the human body has what can be called a stress/tension control system. This system, controlled by the brain, is actually a complex one, composed of many of the body's systems such as the nervous system, the cardio-vascular system, the respiratory system, etc. The purpose of the system is to afford man a means of protection by alerting his defenses in times of tension or need. When the system is activated by one of the many stressors, it results in one or more complex reactions.

In reading many of the books and articles on tension, one finds that the study of the responses to or effects of tension are generally classified into four basic areas. Illustrative of this, is the cate-gorization of stress responses made by the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. This encyclopedia separates the response variables that indicate tension into the following four categories: (1) emotional states, (2) motor behavior patterns, (3) physiological reactions, and (4) disturbance on the cognitive function i.e., behavioral effects.[1]

For the purposes of this study, the effects of tension have been separated into two analytical divisions: (1) the initial effects or symptoms of all types of tension (including healthy tension), which will be discussed here and, (2) the more lasting effects of excessive or unhealthy tension, which will be discussed in Chapter VI. The initial effects of tension will be discussed within the four effect categories

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[1]Lazzarus, International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. XV, pp. 339-340.

of emotional states, motor behavior patterns, physical reactions and be-
havioral effects. Basically the same framework will be used in Chapter
VI also, except that the motor behavior patterns category will be
omitted since all significant effects in this category will be covered
in this section.

The first category to be discussed is that of emotional states.
This refers to the various states of feeling that an individual ex-
periences upon encountering a stressor. In the main, the feelings most
often felt by individuals can be grouped under the three major states
of frustration, conflict anxiety.[1]

Frustration is defined as the state of feeling which accompanies
"the actual blockage of some goal oriented behavior.[2] As with all
feelings, the feeling of frustration varies in quality, strength and
duration. And, the resultant behavior can range from expressions of deep
discouragement and despair, or from violent anger and rage, to more
milder affective states.[3] For example, if we have been blocked in an
attempt at a staff meeting to have a certain proposal adopted, we may
feel frustrated, helpless, powerless. We may become extremely angry or
aggressive. Or perhaps we may just tell ourselves, "you can't win them
all."

Conflict exists when two goals are incompatible, but more broadly
defined it "includes the opposition between an external force or obstacle

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[1]Costello and Zalkind, Psychology in Administration . . ., p. 125.

[2]Lazzarus, International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences,
Vol. XV, p. 340.

[3]Arkoff, Adjustment and Mental Health, pp. 66-67.

and the motive" of the individual.[1] The executive should be most

familiar with this feeling since he invariably experiences it each time

he makes a decision.

Anxiety, like frustration and conflict, is a basic and almost

universal experience. Costello and Zalkind state that:

> Although a psychological experience related to frus-
> tration, anxiety must be distinguished from it. Frus-
> tration is a result of past or present painful feelings
> (need denial); anxiety is the apprehension concerning a
> possibly painful event. Frustration is response to an
> existing event; anxiety is response to the threat of such
> event.[2]

And as Arkoff points out:

> The man in the street has his own terms for anxiety.
> Some of these are fear, worry and nervousness. Nervous
> tension and emotional tension, having the jitters and
> being shaken up also are used to describe anxious con-
> ditions.[3]

Thus depending on the nature and definition of the threat, anxiety can

result in a wide range of feelings, such as apprehension, uneasiness,

foreboding, inadequacy, helplessness, panic and actual terror.

Motor behavior refers to the muscular activity of the body. When

we are experiencing a state of tension, we are aroused and ready for

action, i.e., we are ready for "flight or fight" as the saying goes.

Arkoff gives, perhaps, the best description of the body's possible motor

responses to a stress situation. He states:

> . . . We may be unable to remain in any posture for very
> long. Standing, we shift from foot to foot and pace about.
> Seated, we are apt to perch on the edge of our chair,

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[1]Lazzarus, *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*,
p. 340.

[2]Costello and Zalkind, *Psychology in Administration . . .*, p. 150.

[3]Arkoff, *Adjustment and Mental Health*, p. 110.

jiggling our legs, crossing them, uncrossing them . . .
Lying down, we turn, pitch, and toss, continually changing
our position.

Our fingers, hands, and arms may be constantly active.
Perhaps we drum our fingers, crack our knuckles, bite our
nails, pull at our ears . . . We move our arms about, fold
them . . . unfold them. We fidget, writhe and wiggle.

Sometimes we show little activity, but our entire
bearing seems strained. Our posture is rigid, our muscles
tense, our arms and legs stiff. . . .

Generally, there is a heightened response to stimuli.
A small noise startles us. A gentle touch on our shoulder
may cause us to jump . . . We have difficulty in concen-
trating our attention and applying ourselves.[1]

Physiological reactions encompass the various possible physical

changes that the body's organs undergo as the result of an individual

experiencing a stress situation. These reactions are primarily produced

by the autonomic nervous system.

In studying the physiological reactions to a stress situation,

Dr. Allan J. Fleming has observed the following responses:[2]

1. The pupils of the eyes dilate.

2. The salivary glands become inhibited, and the mouth becomes
   dry.

3. The blood vessels over the body constrict, with the exception
   of the coronary vessels of the heart, and the adrenal glands
   secrete adrenalin.

4. The force of the heart increases; the rate, conductivity,
   and excitability also increases.

5. The smooth muscle of the bronchioles relaxes.

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[1]Ibid., pp. 119-120.

[2]A. J. Fleming, "Executive Stress," Advanced Management, Vol. I
(May, 1962), pp. 11-12.

6. The sphincters of the stomach contract, and the se-
   cretion of gastric juice is inhibited.

7. The motility of the small and large gut is inhibited,
   and the various sphincters contract.

As was the description of motor responses, Arkoff's coverage of
the physiological responses to a stress situation is most comprehensive
and lucid and it provides more concrete indicators. In contrast to
Fleming's list of seven physiological responses, Arkoff separates the
responses according to the physiological area of response i.e., cardio-
vascular, gastrointestinal, respiratory and skin systems.[1] Excluding
the symptoms observed by Fleming, and foregoing the naming of the spe-
cific bodily system involved, Arkoff's list of symptoms includes the
following:[2]

1. You feel excited.

2. It is difficult to swallow because you feel a lump in the
   throat.

3. You have no appetite; your stomach feels as if it were tied
   in knots or filled with butterflies.

4. You tend to breathe more rapidly; your breathing may be
   shallow or deeper than usual.

5. Your skin is affected; you flush or pale; you feel hot,
   cold or clammy; you get "goosepimples"; you perspire.

6. Your voice is high-pitched or it cracks or wavers; frequent
   clearing of the throat is required.

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[1] Arkoff, Adjustment and Mental Health, pp. 122-125.

[2] Ibid.

The final effect category to be described as a symptom of tension is that of behavioral effects. As previously inferred, there are basically two types of behavioral response to a stress situation -- conscious and unconscious. As a rule, conscious behavior is that behavior that results when a person is aware of a problem or a stress situation and consciously takes action to solve the problem or cope with the situation.

Unconscious behavior is that behavior that results when we automatically use an ego defense mechanism to protect ourselves against a state of unconscious tension. These ego defenses, or mental mechanisms, operate primarily in the unconscious mind and "at the time we are using them, or overusing them, we are not aware of the fact. In retrospect we can sometimes recognize how our egos were defending themselves, and we are usually acutely aware of the mental mechanisms grossly employed by other people."[1]

Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, originated the concept of ego defense mechanisms when he described the defensive behavior of repression.[2] Since that time, the list of defense mechanisms has grown so that today there are in excess of thirty identifiable defense mechanisms. Time will not permit a discussion of all of these defense mechanisms, nor is it considered necessary. The following paragraphs will, however, briefly describe those defense mechanisms that are considered to be the most common.

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[1]Justus J. Schifferes, Essentials of Healthier Living (3d ed., New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1967), p. 147.

[2]Ibid.

1. Repression. This is the most basic and probably the most important ego defense mechanism. It is an emotional or mental block that keeps unpleasant memories, feelings and desires out of our conscious mind. Repression also inhibits pleasant feelings that, if not controlled, would lead to socially unacceptable behavior of a sexual or aggressive nature.

2. Reaction Formation. These are efforts to inhibit, mask, or overcome certain impulses by emphasizing opposite ones. "Repression of strong impulses, for instance sexual and hostile impulses, is often accompanied by a counteracting tendency that takes the form of behavior and feelings exactly opposed to the repressed tendencies."[1] For example, sensing unacceptable aggressive urges in himself, a person may react by becoming nauseatingly courteous, kind or generous.

3. Projection. Also related to repression, projection protects against the various feelings of tension by projecting our feelings, attitudes, etc. onto other people. For example, if a project fails, we blame our staff assistant or some other department. If we are hostile, we protect our self-image by projecting or attributing this hostility to another -- then it is acceptable to attack them. "Seeing others in a distorted image of ourselves may make us unduly critical, sarcastic, cynical and pessimistic."[2]

4. Rationalization. This is perhaps the most widely and frequently used ego defense mechanism. Similar to projection, rationalization justifies our actions while ignoring the real motivation. It

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[1]Krech and Crutchfield, Elements of Psychology, p. 648.

[2]Schifferes, Essentials of Healthier Living, p. 149.

is unconscious self-deception -- it is "emotional thinking" not valid reasoning.

5. Displaced Aggression. This defense mechanism is closely akin to projection and is a widely used one. We displace aggression when we are afraid to express our aggressive feelings toward the person who aroused them. Thus, a man may be angry with his superior but displace his anger on his wife or children. "We choose safe or convenient targets for our feelings because expressing them to the real targets may lead to punishment, either from the person we attack or from our own conscience."[1]

It should now be apparent that each individual does have a formidable tension control system. However, having discussed the symptoms of tension in regards to the four effect categories, the reader should not be mislead into thinking that the body's systems function independently of one another. The systems are integrated and the body and the mind react as a whole to tension. It should also be remembered that each individual is psychologically and physically unique. Each has his own tolerance level for the wide array of possible stressors, and each will experience different symptoms in differing degrees.

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[1]Schoonmaker, Anxiety . . ., p. 145.

CHAPTER IV

> Since humans are the most intelligent and also the most
> easily taught of animals, one would expect them to be
> the most highly individuated. No two persons are exactly
> alike in their physical and mental potentialities, and
> certainly no two individuals, even identical twins reared
> in the same family, have the same experiences. Human beings
> are thus potentially less alike than the individuals of any
> other species. It is most surprising therefore, that they
> have chosen to live in closely organized groups whose mem-
> bers carry on a variety of specialized activities but are
> mutually interdependent for the satisfaction of practically
> all their fundamental needs. . . . — Linton[1]

In order to have a solid foundation for understanding the causes

(or sources) and effects of executive tension, a basic knowledge of the

nature of an executive and of the nature of a large corporation is con-

sidered essential. The method chosen to present this overview is to de-

scribe the executive and the corporation in terms of their characteristics

and roles within the social system.

A social system has been defined, by Dr. Gordon Lippitt, as a

'stable pattern of interaction between interdependent social units.'[2] It

is a set of parts which stand in definite relationship to one another and

the concept applies to individuals, groups, organizations and communities.

In addition, each of the parts or sub-systems of the larger social system

can be described in terms of the following eight characteristics:

      1. Goals and objectives.
      2. Norms and values.

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[1]Ralph Linton, The Tree of Culture (New York: Alfred A. Knopf,
Inc., 1957), p. 11.

[2]Gordon L. Lippitt, Organization Renewal (New York: Meredith
Corp., 1969), p. 46.

3. Structure and roles.
4. Problem-solving process.
5. Power, authority and influence.
6. Perpetuation process.
7. Situation and space.
8. Communications process.[1]

Since each of the various sub-systems, the executive, his family, work groups, the organization, etc., have the same behavioral characteristics, it is evident that in the process of interaction that there will be some conflict. Thus, by briefly describing the general behavioral characteristics of the executive and the corporation, the contrast should complete the framework that will enable us to more fully understand the complexities of executive tension.

Goals and objectives refer to what the sub-system 'wants to do.'[2] The goals and objectives may be conscious or unconscious and range from being clear to being vague. There have been many attempts to define the basic goals of man. Four of the more well-known philosophical theories of man are:[3]

1. The rational-economic man theory, which states that man calculates the actions that will maximize his self interest.

2. The social man theory, advanced by Elton Mayo, which argues that man is basically motivated by social needs that are as important as, or more important than, the economic incentives offered by management.

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[1]Ibid., pp. 47-52.

[2]Ibid., p. 49.

[3]Edgar H. Schien, Organizational Psychology (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), pp. 48-60.

3. The self-actualizing man theory, which believes that man has the inherent need to use his capacities in a mature and productive way. This theory is based on Maslow's theory that man's motives can be arranged in a hierarchy of needs: (a) simple needs for survival, safety and security; (b) social and affiliative needs; (c) ego-satisfaction and self-esteem needs; (d) needs for autonomy and independence; and (e) self-actualization needs in the sense of maximum use of all his resources.

4. The complex man theory, which views man as a highly complex, highly variable psychological being. It argues that man has many motives which are arranged in some sort of hierarchy of importance, but also states that this hierarchy of needs is subject to change depending on the time and the situation. In addition, the various needs are said to interact and combine into complex motive patterns. This, then, appears to provide the best general description of the executive's goals.

The basic goals and objectives of a corporation are much more easily defined. Simply stated, the goal of an organization is to maximize profit, be it tangible or intangible. For example, recognizing the various constraints of laws, charters, social and political climate, etc., the private economic enterprise attempts to make a monetary profit while the public organization strives to provide a maximum of service. And Lippitt states:

Structure and roles refer to the social system developing a "pattern of expected behavior that determines the interrelationships of individuals and groups and, thereby, the structure of the organization."[1] As stated in Chapter II, the executive sees himself as a "man in the middle." He is a manager, a leader, an innovator, a mediator, a father, a lover, a concerned citizen, etc. The executive must be able to adjust and cope with these various roles within the structure of the overall social system. Top management, too, is "in the middle," it must arbitrate between employees, customers and the stockholders. Additionally, the organization's structure is characterized by a division of labor and departmentation. It has a "chain of command" or a hierarchy of management positions and depending on the organization, its goals and standards, each executive is expected to perform a certain role. For example, a military officer is expected to be more authoritative or autocratic than an executive in a private enterprise. The structure and role expectations are also powerful determinants of behavior of the individual and of the organization.

The problem-solving process refers to the sub-system's ways of "solving its internal and external conflicts, and to eliminate threat or ambiguity."[2] For both the executive and the organization, "these processes may result in such behavior as flight, fight, or dependency; or they may involve behavior which copes with the situation as it is through analysis, progression, and evaluation."[3]

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[1]Lippitt, Organizational Renewal, p. 50.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

The characteristic of power, authority, and influence refers to "the ability of a sub-system to exert change on other sub-systems within the same organization, and the ability of that organization to effect change within its sub-systems or to influence change in other organizations."[1] The most significant contrast here is that the organization has so much power, authority and influence and the individual executive, in reality, has so little. To be sure, the executive does have a good deal of power over his subordinate non-executive workers, but it is no longer an exploitative power -- most workers are adequately protected by unions and the increasing body of labor laws and regulations. The executive, however, especially in the upper-middle management ranks, is in the position of being exploited. As Vance Packard pointed out, we are in an era where there now is "an exploitation of the leaders rather than the laborers."[2] Most executives have little real freedom. "Their organizations dominate them and move them about, company rules or customs tell them what to do, what to wear, and what to believe in; their constitutional rights are violated, their privacy is invaded and their basic dignity is injured."[3] This state of affairs was also pointed out by William Whyte in his book The Organization Man.[4]

The executive's power or freedom to act independently has been erroding steadily. Its diminishment can be viewed as an inverse function

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[1]Ibid., p. 51.

[2]Vance Packard, The Pyramid Climbers (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1962), p. 9.

[3]Schoonmaker, Anxiety. . ., p. 89.

[4]William H. Whyte, The Organization Man (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1957).

of progress. Modern corporations are so large, complex, and bureaucratic that they, of necessity, require a multitude of rules, procedures and committee action to avert chaos. Computer technology and the advent of more sophisticated and integrated management information systems, portends an even greater restriction of the executive's autonomy as the corporate headquarters, aided by the new management information systems, is able to exert more control through the establishment of more comprehensive decision criterion.

The power, authority, and influence of the corporation is a paradox -- it exists, yet it is, for the most part, an intangible. It is ironic, but it is a group of individual executives acting collectively who exert the power of the organization. Because of the size of the corporation though, and the diffusion of power among the individual executives, the organization's power takes on an impersonal, intangible quality. When policy is made or authority is exercised, the vague, nebulous "they" or "it" was the perpetrator. The corporation, a legal fiction, is perceived to be a living organism.

The executive, then, can be said to be engaged in a power struggle with the organization. Robert Sampson, of Sampson Associates, a management consulting firm, describes the situation as follows:

> The conflict and diversity of the power struggle, the seamy side of management, are found in a five dimension power relationship consisting of five distinct but interrelated facets:
> 1. A manager versus the system.
> 2. A manager versus his peers.
> 3. A manager versus his boss.
> 4. A manager versus his subordinates.
> 5. A manager versus himself.

His contest with the system is one of security and
success, prestige and rank. His struggle with his peers
becomes one of competing with his fellow executives in
carrying out the boss's functions. His conflict with his
boss stems from opposed feelings of domination and sub-
mission as well as independence and dependence. His
contest with his staff is overdoing his work his way on
his terms. A manager's conflict with himself involves
the subordination of his personal power needs to carry
out his organization authority for the interests of the
organization.[1]

The perpetuation process refers to the belief that every sub-

system wishes to maintain or continue its existence. This process is

interrelated with the characteristics of goals and objectives and norms

and values. The executive not only has the basic desire to survive, he

is ambitious; he wants to climb the corporate ladder. The organization

has the desire to survive also. It is evidenced in the "going concern"

concept of accounting; the mergers that take place; the saying "grow or

die"; and, the government organizations/committees that continue to exist

long after their original objectives have been accomplished.

Situation and Space. This characteristic refers to the fact that

"every system and sub-system exists within the sphere of influence of an

even larger system, and the limits constraining each system or sub-system

are determined by its particular circumstances with respect to situation

and space."[2] In its broadest context, situation and space mean that the

executive and the organization are complex systems that are motivated and

affected by a maze of separate, yet interconnected variables e.g., basic

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[1]Robert C. Sampson, Managing the Managers (New York: McGraw-
Hill, Inc., 1965), p. 17.

[2]Lippitt, Organizational Renewal, p. 51.

needs, higher needs, value systems, public opinion, social pressure, governmental laws and regulations, etc. In the narrow sense, the characteristic of situation and space refers to physical arrangements.[1] The executive has a specific office area, areas of responsibilities, areas of influence, etc. The corporation has market or service areas, a share of "the market," it is an industry "leader" or "follower," etc.

Communication. This is the last identifying characteristic of a social system, and it refers to the belief that "a social system must communicate to survive and grow. Communication is the means for providing information which permits the system or sub-system to change, grow and achieve its goals."[2] The executive's method of communicating is determined by the nature of the other sub-systems within the social system and so too is the corporation's method of communicating. Thus, the communications process is also dependent upon a host of interrelated variables and there are, therefore, many barriers which are encountered. Common barriers to the executive's communication process are all related to his perception. For example:

1. He hears what he expects to hear.

2. He ignores information that conflicts with what he knows.

3. He evaluates the source i.e., the sender is liked or disliked, reliable or not reliable; the sender has ulterior motives.

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[1] Ibid., p. 52.

[2] Ibid.

4. He has a semantic problem i.e., depending on the time and situation, words have different meanings.

5. He has difficulty interpreting non-verbal communications.

The organizational communication network suffers because of the individual barriers to communication and in addition has to guard against such defects as:

1. The size of the organization i.e., the larger and/or the more geographically dispersed it is, the more difficulty in communicating.

2. Defects in the formal network e.g., arbitrary or demoralizing behavior by administrative assistants and secretaries.

3. Personality clashes among employees.

4. Gossip and distorted communications through "the grapevine."

Many problems can be attributed to "breakdowns" in communications and when the process is viewed as one being dependent on perception, it is not hard to realize that this is a major tension producing area.

In contrasting the characteristics and roles of the executive and the large organization as they appear within the social system, we have seen some actual and potential stressor areas. Let us now examine the specific stressors.

CHAPTER V

CAUSES OF EXECUTIVE TENSION

As previously defined, tension is the by-product of stress. A stressor i.e., an event or happening (actual or imagined) or a tension state, is encountered or experienced and it is perceived by the individual, consciously or unconsciously, in such a way that an emotional state of tension results. There are two broad categories of tension, constructive, healthy, or positive tension states and destructive, unhealthy, or negative tension states, and each category varies by type, quality (intensity of feelings), and duration. This chapter is concerned with the negative aspects of tension as it relates to the executive in a large corporation, and it will deal with the causes (sources) of executive tension i.e., the major stressors encountered by the executive in the course of his normal activities.

The sources of stress are infinite. Like the natures of tension, the executive and the organization, there are a variety of ways to categorize and describe the myriad of stressors. For purposes of analysis, and in the interests of clarity and consistency, it was decided to describe the stressors as situations that are basically recognizable within specific sub-systems of the social system (two of which were described in Chapter IV). And, although the stressors are identified as being generally related to the individual, the organization, the

family or society, the complexity and often circular interrelationships of the problem should be remembered.

There is a very close intimate relationship between tension, experiences and perception. It is intricate and circular. Man is a complex psychological being and his behavior is "overdetermined." There are many reasons why we do what we do, but generally it can be said that man's needs affect his perceptions, which cause his reactions, which affect his perceptions. Thus, in a broad sense, we can say that executive tension results from environmental stressors that are perceived, consciously or unconsciously, to be a threat, to cause a conflict, or to be a frustrator to one or more of the executive's hierarchy of needs, and which is generally manifested by feelings of anxiety, conflict or frustration.

In addition, it should be noted that the executive's perception is affected by his personality. Personality growth dates from birth and is defined as "the entire psychological structure of the individual, including his abilities, traits, motives, habits, cognitions, and their complex patterns."[1] Thus, man's personality can be considered to be the sum total of his behavior; and behavior, from the psychological viewpoint, is considered to be the "product of a combination of drives, needs, expectations and external demands, and the capacity of people to deal with these forces."[2] In turn, this definition reminds us of the intricacies and complexities of such theories of intrapersonal forces

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[1]Krech and Crutchfield, Elements of Psychology, p. 228.

[2]Harry Levinson, The Exceptional Executive (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 12.

as: (1) the "id" -- with its constructive and destructive drives; (2) the "ego" -- whose job it is to control, guide and direct the pressures from the "id" and; (3) the "superego" or "conscience" -- which as the internal governor has the functions of acquiring rules, evolving values, aspiring to an ego ideal, and making self-judgements.[1]

Recognizing that the relationships between tension, experiences, perception and personality are extremely complex and usually inter-related or overlapping, we can now describe some of the major "real life" sources of executive tension. As stated above, the stressors will be described as situations or areas within a specific sub-system of the social system. This categorization is purely subjective and is being done in awareness of the fact that many stressors are ubiquitous and/or applicable to more than one sub-system of the social system. Thus the environmental stressors affecting the executive will be discussed in the following sequence: (1) individual and organizational stressors, (2) family stressors and, (3) societal stressors. However, prior to enumerating the stressors, some additional definitions are in order.

Individual and Organizational Stressors. Individual stressors are those that are perceived to be primarily related with the executive's relationship to himself and to other individuals in any of the social sub-systems. Organizational stressors are viewed as being related to the executive and the organization as a whole i.e., situations created by or attributed to the organization that cause tension within the executive. These two categories were combined because many of the stressors are too intimately related to each category.

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[1]Ibid., pp. 12-13.

Family Stressors. These stressors are perceived to be primarily related to the executive and his immediate family. These are the family situations or happenings that generate tension within the executive.

Societal Stressors. These stressors are perceived to be related to the executive and society at large. These are the situations or the events perceived by the executive in his community, state, nation or the world that cause him to experience feelings of anxiety, conflict or frustration.

Individual and Organizational Stressors

1. Decision Making. This is a major executive function and therefore a very common tension source. The executive generally must consider all the aspects and consequences of his decisions since they may affect his superiors, his contemporaries, and his subordinates. It is not inconceivable that a single bad judgement could do irreparable damage to an executive's career.

There are many specific decision situations that could be cited as decision stressors. The most universal one, however, is considered to be that of executing painful personnel decisions. For example, many managers approach the periodic appraisal interview/performance rating with deep misgivings or dread.[1] In addition, some executives become very tense when faced with the necessity for firing or "passing over" a loyal or well-liked individual. And, if the executive fails to make an objective decision, this creates an inner conflict which only heightens the executive's tension.

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[1] Koontz and O'Donnell, Principles of Management, p. 439.

Sometimes executives have too much responsibility and in any case, it is extremely doubtful that many executives make many decisions that do not result in some feeling of emotion such as doubt, fear, apprehension, anger, anxiety, etc.

2. Loneliness. This stressor is sometimes referred to as "summit isolation" and is almost self-explanatory. As the executive progresses up the hierarchal ladder of the organization, he is more and more alone -- the people he can confide in or confer with get fewer and fewer. The following words are those of a company president, but they do give some insight into executive loneliness:

> The president has to live alone and like it. If he indulges in the luxury of thinking outloud, he sets off a chain reaction of rumors throughout the organization. He is the final focal point of all the competitive pressures of men in the organization who are ambitious. If he confides in one and not in the others, he immediately lowers the morale of his executive staff.[1]

Noting that health experts view loneliness as a principal cause of executive tension, Duns Review stated:

> With corporate politics what they are, executives shun close association with subordinates, approach peers with caution and find superiors aloof. Thus it is no surprise that many executives feel isolated, even threatened.[2]

3. Advancement Problems. There are varieties of stress situations that fall under this heading and, although they can result in feelings of conflict and frustration, the primary tension state experienced by the executive is a feeling of anxiety. This is because executives have, as a rule, high achievement needs. Indeed, "successful

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[1] Ewing, The Managerial Mind, p. 39.

[2] "The Truth About Executive Tension," Duns Review, Vol. LXXIX (February, 1962), p. 87.

executives are more than high achievers. They are chronically anx-
ious."[1]

Jennings infers that many executives define success and failure
solely in terms of moving, or not moving, up the corporate ladder.[2]
And, since there is limited room at the top, many must fail. For this
reason, nearly all executives are, at least occasionally, afraid that
they may fail. In addition, "success breeds anxiety . . . because it is
so precariously based upon the expectations and demands of others
equally human as one's self."[3]

Specific stressors in this area are:[4]

    a.) The Anxiety of Anticipation. Executives generally
        know when they are being considered for promotion.
        For many, the waiting period can be one characterized
        by a high state of tension.

    b.) Promotion. Paradoxically, the success of being pro-
        moted is a stressor for many executives. For the
        majority of executives, the tension is mostly re-
        lated to the newness and uncertainity that generally
        is experienced in assuming and learning the intricacies
        of the new position. Some, however, secretly dread

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[1]Eugene Emerson Jennings, The Executive in Crisis (East Lansing,
Michigan: Michigan State University, 1965), p. 37.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Schoonmaker, Anxiety. . ., pp. 108-121.

promotion, perhaps because they know or fear they have exceeded their competence level, but also because it means more responsibility, greater uncertainty and increases the probability of failure.

c.) Being Passed Over Or Fired. If a particular promotion was very important to a man; or if he feels that the "passover" means he has reached his terminal position, he may have an acute attack of tension.

Similar to being passed over, is the plight of being ignored or being subtly forced to resign or retire. Management today is becoming very adept at these maneuvers.

The ultimate disaster, however, is to be summarily fired. The resultant tension state is much more severe and generally gives rise to a host of other stressors which heighten the executive's tension.

All of these advancement problems are strong stressors and depending on the situation, the timing and other variables, they are interrelated with and/or lead to role conflict and ambiguity problems and also to identity problems.

4. Role Conflict and Ambiguity. The executive has been referred to as a "man in the middle." He plays many different roles in the various social sub-systems in addition to the role of executive or manager. He is a task group leader, a group member, an arbitrator, a mediator, a peer, a subordinate, a bachelor, a husband, a father, a

lover, a friend, etc., etc. For each role, the executive and others expect a certain behavior or conformity. Many times the executive has difficulty exhibiting the expected behavior and/or he doesn't really know what behavior is expected or acceptable. These situations can result in serious tension states for the executive and, in addition, can result in behavioral reactions on the part of others which can heighten the executive's existing tension.

Kahn et al., studied, in depth, the problem of role conflict and ambiguity in organizations and developed a theory of role dynamics dealing specifically with stress situations. This theory is based on the premise that in order for organizations to survive, grow and function effectively, there exists a basic requirement that the organizational members must exhibit certain appropriate behavior. This dependency on specific role performance is found to become more acute as the organization grows in size and complexity and the requirement for more conformity leads to the necessity for role playing by the members of the organization. However, this demand for conformity does not, by itself, necessarily create problems of conflict and ambiguity. These problems are seen to arise more often when there is a requirement for successful conformity under conditions of dynamic change and they are compounded when conditions of conflicting and ambiguous direction exist.[1]

Role conflict and ambiguity situations are particular powerful stressors because they often have a multiplier effect. That is they can

[1]Robert L. Kahn et al., Organizational Stress: Studies in Role Conflict and Ambiguity (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1964), pp. 11-35.

result in creating new problems such as personality clashes, indecisiveness, aggression, etc. And frequently, role conflict and ambiguity situations lead to identity problems.

5. Identity Problems. "Identity" refers to man's self-image or self-esteem, and although heavily influenced by the early formative years of childhood, the self-image is in a continuous state of evolution.

Levinson states that:

> An established identity is the smoothest way each of us has of handling the pressures of the id, the demands of the superego, and the contingencies of the environment. The more a man is certain of his identity, the more he defines it by activity as a friend, a husband, a competitor, a manager.[1]

Paramount in the dynamic struggle for identity is the problem of conflicting values which can be viewed as falling within four dimensions: (a) "human - nonhuman orientation"; (b) "self - others orientation"; (c) "aggression - affection orientation," and; (d) "idealistic - materialistic orientation."[2]

Human - nonhuman orientation refers to the conflict that the executive experiences when he is faced with the situation of not practicing what he preaches. Management or leadership styles range from the authoritarian type to the humanistic type. Since World War II there has been a considerable emphasis on the teaching of human relations in management courses and more and more organizations publicly state that this is the type of management practices that they believe in. However, outside of the classroom, this philosophy is not widely encouraged by

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[1] Harry Levinson, Emotional Health in the World of Work (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc. 1964), p. 156.

[2] Ibid., pp. 159-164.

the organizations nor is it widely employed by the executive. Likert has concluded from his studies in this area that, although most managers believe humanistic management to be the most successful, the predominant management style is of the "benevolent authoritative" type.[1] "It is quite obvious that far more consideration is given to things -- machines, statistics, advertising -- than to people."[2] Thus, if one wants to manage humanistically, but is forced to adopt an authoritarian style or vice-versa he can experience considerable tension.

The conflict of self - others orientation is another powerful stressor. Our society has a culture that advocates honesty, integrity, fair play, courage, etc. What does the executive do when employed by an organization that has an "ends justifies the means" philosophy? What inner conflict does he endure when he places his ambitions above ethics and is unfair to fellow human beings? These situations give the executive cause to raise many questions about himself and the organization.

The identity stressor of aggression - affection orientation refers to the disillusionment that many young executives experience after joining a large corporation. Expecting to be aided in growing into a mature, responsible executive, he soon perceives that he is in an arena, with the organization as referee, and that the only winners are the politically astute fighters. Some possible conflicts are: should he play the game and prostitute his integrity?; can he plan the game without

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[1]Robert C. Albrook, "Participative Management: Time for a Second Look," Human Relations and Organizational Behavior, eds. Keith Davis and William G. Scott (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1969), p. 124.

[2]Levinson, Emotional Health . . ., p. 159.

completely abandoning his values? If he quits, can he adequately support

his family in another endeavor?

The fourth dimension of the problem of conflicting values is the

identity stressor of idealistic - materialistic orientation. This re-

fers to the conflict that a man faces when he is torn between his ideal-

istic values and his materialistic values. This can be a source of

great tension for some executives and covers a wide range of situations.

Levinson states:

> The rising standard of living in this country has di-
> minished the importance of money as the prime motivator of
> men. People more frequently ask themselves what they want to
> do with their working lives and in what ways they can make
> a contribution to society. . . . Many executives who have
> accumulated wealth as they have achieved their occupational
> goals ask themselves, "Now what?" Some merely struggle with
> this question.[1]

6. Administrative Inefficiency. Since an executive's performance

is greatly dependent on his administrative abilities, inefficiencies in

administrative techniques are often viewed as an effect of tension.

Many times, however, they can be the actual stressor. The manager's

functions are to plan, organize, direct and control. Too often, the

organization expects, or the executive tries to do, too much, too fast.

He fails to budget his time or plan his work day; he gets involved in

unnecessary detail and fails to delegate authority properly; etc. The

executive should know when to be a manager and when to be a "doer."[2] If

he is incapable of doing this, he is inviting much unnecessary tension.

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[1]Ibid., p. 162.

[2]Raymond O. Loen, "Manager or Doer? A Test for Top Executives,"
Business Management, Vol. XXIX (May, 1966), p. 97.

7. Overwork. This stressor is separate from, but is, sometimes, also related to, administrative inefficiencies or poor managerial performance. In 1957, William Whyte, defining executives as rising middle managers, vice-presidents and presidents, stated that executives were generally overworked: the five-day work week was fiction and the typical executive's average work week ran between fifty and sixty hours.[1] There is no evidence that this situation has changed since then.

During the past year, many articles appearing in the Wall Street Journal, Business Week, Fortune, Time, Newsweek, etc., have indicated that the executive is still a long way from the forty-hour work week. In addition, the problem of overwork was discussed with almost one hundred executives, in the military, the federal government, and private business during the course of this study. These executives included military officers thru the rank of full Colonel, civil servants thru the grade of GS-15, private business executives thru the position of vice-president, and three executives engaged in management consultant services. All of these individuals verified the fact that the forty-hour work week for the executive is a myth. Most of them enjoyed their work, some actually enjoyed the long hours, but most agreed that they did not enjoy the long hours but that they had to be endured because "that's the way the system is." In other words, the organization rewards or smiles upon the "work addict."

8. Age Problems. Growing old is a problem that confronts every-one, but for the ambitious and many times chronically anxious executive,

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[1]Whyte, The Organization Man, p. 157.

it can be particularly stressful. Consider the executive who has not
reached the goals that he set for himself as a younger man. Time is
running out. He may consider himself a failure and suffer serious
identity problems. Unless he is able to cope with the situation and
adjust his goals, the probability of increased tension is greatly in-
creased.

9. Health Problems. As stated in Chapter II, there are many
myths about the hazards of being an executive. Indeed, the executive
is probably subjected to a larger number of intensive stressors than
the non-executive; but he is also, on the whole, better equipped men-
tally and physically to cope with them. However, many popular articles
are written on executive health that disregard this fact and appear to
be written with the intent of frightening executives into believing they
are doomed.[1] And, the executive who believes in these myths becomes
more vunerable to tension as he advances in age.

10. Change. For many executives today, change is a most power-
ful and ever present stressor. We are living in an era that can be
characterized by the word "change." Knowledge is expanding at an ever
increasing rate and new ways, new systems, new concepts of doing things
are constantly being evolved.

This social-economic-technological revolution has been accen-
tuated by the advent of the computer. And, as a result of the advancing
computer technology, management is in an acute period of transition.
There is much speculation as to the future of junior and middle manage-
ment executives. Some say the ranks will be decimated; others say there

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[1]Jacobson, Tension Control for Businessmen, p. 88.

will be little change.[1] Regardless of the eventual outcome, the un-
certainty of the situation has a significant effect on some executives.
In addition, the executive knows that he must become knowledgeable and
adapt to the new ways or face failure.

11. Mergers. Mergers are not new to the American business scene.
They seem to parallel the behavior of the stock market.[2] It is also
not new that "merger fever" creates a certain amount of tension in the
minds of certain executives. "Mergers create a few executive jobs in
the acquiring company but usually eliminate several times as many in the
acquired company."[3] In addition if "merger fever" does not give the
executive cause to fear for his job, it can give him cause to worry
about possible adverse promotional opportunities.

12. Organizational Policies. There are basically four kinds of
policy: clear, ambiguous, vacillating and vague. And, in view of the
complexity of man, and depending on the time and the situation, all four
kinds of policy could, in a general sense, be said to be stressors.
Clarity notwithstanding, there are also many specific types of organi-
zational policy which are executive stressors. Some of the more common
are:

a.) Hiring and Advancement Practices. Some organizations
invade the executive's privacy by going so far as to

[1]Donald R. Shaul, "What's Really Ahead for Middle Management,"
The Computer Sampler, eds. William F. Boore and Jerry R. Murphy
(New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1968), pp. 203-212.

[2]Rubin E. Slesinger and Asher Isaacs, Business, Government and
Public Policy (2d ed.; Princeton, N.J.: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc.,
1968), p. 81.

[3]Schoonmaker, Anxiety. . ., p. 115.

interview and give psychological tests to both the executive and the wife.[1] Others give undue weight to seniority and tenure or educational background, thus the executive feels anxious or frustrated because he perceives that ability and performance are secondary. Hiring from the outside is another frequent stressor. And, in other situations where the executive is ostensibly making a selection, he is so restricted by company selection rules that he realizes that his authority to hire and fire is only a myth. All of these situations, and many more, can result in strong feelings of anxiety, conflict or frustration.

b.) Job Rotation. Many companies have job rotation policies for junior and middle management executives and some individuals find it frustrating or demoralizing to have to adjust to new positions and procedures on a frequent basis.

c.) Philosophy of Leadership. "The authoritarian traditions of business leadership in the nineteenth century have been only slightly modified to a more benevolent but little less authoritarian style of management in the 1960's."[2] It is ironic that individually, most executives agree that the humanistic

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[1]Ibid., p. 64.

[2]Levinson, The Exceptional Executive, p. 66.

approach is the most successful, yet when they op-
erate collectively as top management, they generally
motivate the executive ranks through the use of "the
carrot and the stick." The individual executive knows
that he must "produce or else." Thus, if one operates
in an organizational climate wherein there is little
margin for, or understanding of, error, he is op-
erating under a certain degree of constant tension.

In addition to the above-listed stressors, there are some others
that should be mentioned that require little or no explanation. They
are: (1) an unsatisfactory superior, (2) incompatible associates, (3)
a job that doesn't fit, (4) underutilization of abilities, (5) lack of
opportunity for advancement, (6) overemphasis on individual competition
and, (7) top management sanctioning staff usurpation of line authority.

Family Stressors

Top management will argue that family stressors are not caused
by an executive's work but that they can affect his work performance. An
executive's wife, however, generally believes that it is the organi-
zation's demands on her husband that make him tense and therefore, af-
fects his home life. Both of these views are too simplistic. In
actuality, family stressors are both a cause and an effect of tension
and the relationship reinforces the fact that the relationship between
stress and tension is a complex interrelationship of many variables.

However, in view of the fact that tension has the characteristic
of "feeding on itself," i.e., a state of tension can itself be a stres-
sor, family problems can be viewed as being primarily stressors.

Recognizing that the executive's behavior, as influenced by the individual and organizational stressors, has an effect on the family's behavior, the situations or happenings that have been categorized as family stressors are those situations that: (1) primarily have a significant impact on the family unit and results in family member behavior that affects the executive, and; (2) family-originated demands or responsibilities that cause the executive tension. Some of the most common family stressors are listed below.

1. The Conflict of Time. Who comes first, the wife and family or the company? This is a conflict that constantly faces most executives. Most executives are required to put in long hours at the office. In addition, many are called upon to do considerable traveling on short business trips. The organization, in many instances, takes little official notices of a man's family obligations. Many organizations have the unwritten law that the organization comes first. For example, how often have we heard the facetious, yet too often true, statement that: "if the organization wanted you to have a wife, they would have issued you one." And many times, although not working or traveling, the executive is mentally separated from his family because his mind is on business problems.

Many wives do not suffer in silence. They let their husbands know that they expect more help and/or time from him. This conflict can result in a terrible burden for the executive. How does he allocate his scarce resource of time between the organization and the family? Too often, the executive is beset with powerful feeling of guilt, anxiety,

conflict and frustration. He perceives himself to be on a merry-go-round, with no apparent way of resolving his conflict.

2. Moving or Relocation. For various reasons such as promotion, company training policy, vacant positions, etc., the executive is forced to make frequent moves. In fact, the executive ranks today constitute one of the most mobile segments of our society.[1]

This new life style of mobility can be very stressful to the executive and his family. Some families are stable enough that the constant moving actually brings the members closer together, but many suffer adverse effects. Friends, neighbors and community ties are especially important to wives and children. Losing them and having to start anew, finding a new house, facing possible financial losses, school and racial relations in the new area, etc., are all stressors that can create considerable tension for the family which can have a "multiplier" effect on the executive.

3. "Problem" Wives. Just as the executive can be viewed as the "man in the middle," the wife can be viewed as the "woman in the middle." She too is faced with many conflicting demands and many times she is unable to cope with these demands.

Due to feelings of inadequacy, unreasonable demands or expectations of the husband, fear of failure as a wife and/or mother, personal needs and expectations, personality characteristics and thousands of other reasons, the wife can behave in such a fashion as to cause the executive husband substantial feelings of tension. For example, if the

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[1]William F. Glueck, "Easing the Trauma of Executive Transfer," Business Horizons, Vol. XII (December, 1969), p. 23.

husband perceives that his wife is unfaithful, addicted to alcohol or drugs, slovenly, a dirty housekeeper, inconsiderate, "not understanding," selfish, a poor mother, a gossip, a social climber, etc., he will not only be subject to tension, he will probably react in such a way that his tension state will be heightened.

Jules Archer states that:

Studies indicate that the higher an executive climbs, the more dissatisfied his wife becomes and the greater the emotional stress on his home life. Many wives, baffled by a steadily rising standard of living that only seems to alienate them increasingly from their husbands, become unsure of themselves and what they really want -- It's the rare man that evaluates and gets out of the race.[1]

4. Problem Children. The children too, because of their personal needs and personality characteristics, often behave in such a way as to cause the executive father tension. In addition to worrying about his job and his wife, today's executive worries about, or has to cope with, such problems affecting his children as underachieving in school, juvenile delinquency, loose morals, addiction to alcohol or drugs, psychological problems, etc. This is not to say that the non-executive father doesn't worry about, or have to cope with, such problems. However, the executive is seen to be under greater stress in these situations because he and society expect more from him e.g., we have heard the saying, "if you can't handle your kids, how can you manage a business?"

Just as common as the above stressors, yet requiring no discussion are the following tension generating situations: (1) concern

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[1]Jules Archer, "Is the Rat Race Really Worth It?," Business Management, Vol. 36 (April, 1969), p. 52.

for or over the physical and/or mental health of wife and children; (2)
sexual problems; (3) "keeping up with the Jones's"; (4) a working wife;
and (5) the situation where one spouse is status and achievement
oriented and the other spouse is security-centered.

Societal Stressors

The world today, and especially the United States, can be said
to be experiencing a prolonged state of heightened tension. We are in
the midst of a "technological and social revolution" that is fraught
with crises and the pressures of change. As previously stated, many of
our organizations, public and private, are faced with conflict, frus-
tration and dissension. Long cherished traditions are being challenged.

Our age can also be characterized as one of grave peril. Indeed,
there is grave doubt in the minds of many as to man's chances of sur-
viving on earth! Already engaged in an undeclared war in Southeast Asia,
we seem to be constantly in fear of the possibility of a nuclear World
War. And equally as threatening, is the problem of environmental pol-
lution and the dangers of overpopulation.

Peter Drucker's new book, The Age of Discontinuity, focuses on
the changes, visible and to come, that face us today, and its discussion
of the major forces creating these changes presents an excellent picture
of the societal stressors affecting today's executive.[1] Time, however,
will not allow such a comprehensive analysis in this paper. Nevertheless,
the stressors covered in the following paragraphs should suffice:

1. The World Situation. As previously mentioned, the world is
in a turmoil -- war in Southeast Asia and in the Middle East, coups and

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[1]Drucker, The Age of Discontinuity.

unstable governments in Africa and Latin America, the Cold War, etc. These situations are not only stressors in the sense that they affect governmental behavior and that they create general anxiety on the whole of society, they are stressors which affect the business world by creating uncertainity in regards to executive planning and decision making.

2. Bureaucracies. The huge organization is a dominant factor in society. "Every single social task of importance today is entrusted to a large institution organized for perpetuity . . ."[1] Our federal and state government, unions and corporations are so big that our power as individuals is miniscule. As the consumer feels powerless and frustrated when arguing with a computer about an erroneous bill, so too does the executive sometimes feel when he is faced with government restrictions and regulations, union grievance rules and feather-bedding, and the long list of written/unwritten corporation rules and procedures.

3. Behavior of Top Leaders. It is an accepted truth that a leader's behavior has a significant impact on those below him. It is also certain that when a leader exhibits behavior that is at variance with social standards of honesty and integrity, those below him will, to some degree, experience feelings of anxiety, conflict or frustration.

For example, each of the following situations are considered to be stressors that create some degree of tension, conscious or unconscious, within the executive, indeed within most of society:

a.) Presidents or administrations who can't be trusted, e.g., "the credibility gap."

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[1]Ibid., p. x.

b.) Congressional leaders who appear to put political interests before the national good/security.

c.) Congressional refusal to establish enforceable codes of conduct/ethics as they have for other government employees, e.g., witness the double standard applied to Mssrs. Dodd and Powell.

d.) Congressional refusal/reluctance to modernize administrative procedures e.g., the undemocratic seniority system.

e.) Attempts by DOD officials and high military to cover-up suspected cases of gross inefficiency, wrong doings and other scandals.

f.) General Motors's attempt to discredit Ralph Nader.

g.) Recognition at all levels of authority of instances of inequities, corruption, and hypocritical or out-dated laws and regulations, with little or no effort being exerted to correct same.

And with the risk of being too simplistic, it is suggested that the above stressors not only contribute to the executive experiencing a generalized or specific state of tension, but also contribute in a large degree, to the so-called "generation gap," which of itself can be viewed as an executive stressor.

4. Community Activities. Many executives are subjected to situations within their communities which can heighten tensions caused by individual, organizational and family stressors. For example, it is not

uncommon for the successful executive to be called upon to exercise his special talents to assist in community affairs. In a sense, this can be viewed as an extension of his work environment which has the added pressure of fear of failure before his friends in the community.

Other societal stressors which need no explanation are: (1) inflation; (2) the threat of recession; (3) federal and state fiscal/monetary policy; (4) problems of the cities, the ghettos and suburbia; (5) transportation problems; (6) conservation versus pollution; and (7) the racial conflicts. These and all the other societal stressors can affect the executive either directly as a concerned citizen, or indirectly through their affect on the other sub-systems of the social system.

Having discussed the areas of individual, organizational, family and societal stressors, and many of the specific stressors within each group, it is recognized that it is impossible to touch on all of the sources of executive tension. Nevertheless, those discussed are considered to be a good representation of the stressors most frequently encountered by the executive.

CHAPTER VI

THE EFFECTS OF EXECUTIVE TENSION

The effects of tension are as many and varied as are the causes of tension. They are also constructive or destructive. This chapter will focus on the destructive or negative aspects of executive tension and will describe some of the major effects that negative tension can cause.

You will recall that in discussing the symptoms of tension in Chapter III, that the effects of tension were said to be observable through the four effect categories of: (1) emotional states, (2) motor behavior patterns, (3) physiological or physical reactions and, (4) behavioral effects. In addition, it was also stated that the effects of tension could also be divided into two major areas of: (1) the initial effects of all tension on a person, without regard to the intensity or duration of the tension state -- in which case all four of the effect categories were considered to be of primary importance; and (2) the more lasting effects of excessive tension on a person -- in which all of the effect categories except the motor behavior patterns were considered to be of significance.

Chapter III discussed the symptoms, the early warnings, or the initial effects of tension. This chapter will discuss the negative aspects of excessive tension on the executive within the sequential framework

of behavioral effects, emotional effects, and physical effects. Also,
particular attention will be directed towards the effect that excessive
tension has on the executive's behavior and performance on the job.

Prior to discussing the effects of tension on the executive
within the chosen categorical framework, some general observations should
be made. As previously mentioned, each individual has a unique tension
control system. Each system has its limits; and each person has a tension
tolerance which is dependent on a host of variables such as physical and
mental stamina, personality, etc. Tension is the body's reaction to
stress. It is evidenced by physical and psychological defense mech-
anisms which attempt to restore the body systems to a state of equili-
brium. And, if these defense mechanisms are insufficient to cope with
the tension, and/or if they are called upon for too frequent or too pro-
longed duty, the emotional, physical and behavioral reactions can be
severe.

As a constructive force, tension is similar to economic revenue,
i.e., it has a point of diminishing returns. As a motivator, tension
can enhance productivity or performance, but it reaches a point at which
it has negative effects. This phenomena was pointed out by the famous
Dr. Hans Selye in his study of the effects of continued stress (tension)
on the human system.

According to Selye's General-Adaptation-Syndrome Theory, the
body's reaction to unresolved stress (tension) occurs in three major
stages: the alarm reaction, the stage of resistance and the stage of
exhausation.

1.   The alarm reaction. . . . A call to arms to the body's
     defense forces in the face of biological or psycho-
     logical stress.

     . . . .

2.   The stage of resistance. . . . the system evidently
     'learns' how to adapt to the particular stress, and
     the symptoms that occurred during the alarm stage dis-
     appear oven though the stress continues.

         . . . If successful adaptation is achieved in the
     stage, the individual can cope with the stress over a
     considerable period of time. Sometimes, however, the
     hormornal defenses overshoot their mark and lead to
     bodily damage and pathology such as ulcers or other
     'diseases of adaptation.'

3.   The stage of exhaustion. If the stress continues too
     long or becomes too severe or if the organism is unable
     to make an effective adaptation during the stage of
     resistance, the bodily defenses eventually breakdown,
     leading to a stage of exhaustion. Now many of the
     symptoms which appeared during the alarm reaction begin
     to reappear . . . Further exposure to stress leads
     eventually to disintegration and death.

         When the stress represents a threat to the self-
     structure rather than to the body, various psycho-
     logical defenses are mustered in addition to the
     physiological ones described by Selye. Thus, the in-
     dividual may be able to develop resistance to a
     psychological stress by learning new competencies or
     increasing his stress tolerance in other constructive
     ways. Or he may be able to erect defenses stable
     enough to protect him fairly well . . . and allow him
     to maintain coordinated functioning. But any heavy,
     long-continued stress takes its toll, and eventually
     it may exceed his adjustive resources.[1]

Behavioral Effects

     In the first section of Chapter V, it was stated that behavior,

from the psychological viewpoint, was considered to be the product of a

combination of drives, needs, expectations and external demands, and the

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[1]James C. Coleman, "The General-Adaptation-Syndrome," Psychology
in Administration. . ., eds. Costello and Zalkind, pp. 129-130.

capacity of people to deal with these forces. It was also stated that man's personality could be viewed as the sum total of his behavior.

Ego defense mechanisms are a prime determinant of one's personality or behavioral patterns. As was noted in Chapter III, when a person experiences a state of tension, his stress control system is alerted. If the stress situation is one that threatens the equilibrium of the person's personality, and he is not able to cope with the situation objectively, one or more of the automatic ego defense mechanisms are called into play. However, since these defense mechanisms are, for the most part employed unconsciously, their use can be a problem.

Since defense mechanisms (defensive behavior) are a psychological means of eliminating or reducing the emotional pain or duress of tension, we learn to repeatedly use those mechanisms that alleviate our suffering, even if the defensive behavior is ultimately harmful to us. Because they are generally unconscious, automatic reactions, we many times fail, or are unable, to recognize that the short-term benefits of relief are not worth the long term costs e.g., alcoholism, neuroses or psychoses. In this regard Schoonmaker states:

> Defenses can also make the underlying problem more serious or create other problems.

> Defenses are also self-defeating because they can work only if a person deceives himself, and self-deception becomes more difficult and exhausting as time goes on. Defenses relieve anxiety by preventing us from becoming aware of a problem, but our attempts to relieve this anxiety may appear irrational to us. Because doubts about our own rationality create intense anxiety, we have to deceive ourselves about both the underlying problem and the defensive behavior it has caused. We become defensive about

our defensiveness. We have to rationalize and justify
our defensive behavior and this becomes very exhausting.[1]

Thus, the amount of tension a man feels can, in many instances, be less
important than the way he handles it.

It is evident, then, that the executive's personality or be-
havioral patterns can be seriously effected by excessive tension. This
section will attempt to describe some of the common behavioral reactions
that can result when an executive experiences excessive tension. As
will be evident when reading the section on the emotional effects of
tension, there is a good deal of overlap between the behavioral and
emotional effects of tension. In fact, in some respects they can not be
separated. However, the separation has been made for the purpose of
emphasis. Whereas the section on emotional effects will make mention of
some behavioral effects, the emphasis will be on the emotional disorders.
In this section, the main focus will be on the effects that excessive
tension can have on an executive's management practices and performance.

The method chosen to describe these effects is one that was used
by Harry Levinson in his book, Emotional Health: In the World of Work.[2]
Five behavior reaction patterns will be described in the following para-
graphs. In each of these areas, it will be evident that tension can
cause the executive to violate many universally accepted management
principles.

1. Fear Reactions. "Management by crisis" is a term that has
often been used to describe the management technique of an executive who

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[1]Schoonmaker, Anxiety. . ., pp. 136-137.

[2]Levinson, Emotional Health. . ., pp. 53-146.

is afflicted with fear reactions. These are probably the most common types of reactions to tension and can be caused by any type of tension, i.e., objective or non-objective, situational or general, conscious or unconscious, etc.

Most people that have fear reactions are unable to perform as well as they can or are accustomed to performing. They have difficulty in concentrating and they are often hypersensitive and hard to get along with. Many repress their feelings and are insensitive to the feelings of others -- they appear smug, superior, cold or aloof. They often adopt the "decibel" approach to communicating.

As an effect of tension, fear reactions are many, diffuse and contradictory. While one executive can react by being authoritarian, highly suspicious and refuse to delegate authority, another can react by being overly permissive, trusting, and consent to delegate authority to the point where his control is practically ineffective. Others are unable to make decisions without grave doubts; they are afraid of assuming responsibility and if things go wrong, they will go so far as to lie or to try to blame someone else -- they become famous as "buck passers." Still others, on occasion, become obsequious, fawning "yes men" to their superiors, and expect the same from their subordinates. This type of behavior does not generally inspire subordinates or create a favorable work climate.

2. Depressive Reactions. Depression is a sense of dejection, pessimism or low spirits; and depressive reactions are probably the second most common behavioral effects of tension. The most common cause of these reactions is probably the tension caused by a stressor that is

perceived to be a threat, a conflict or a frustration to one's identity. Levinson states that:

> Although depression can occur at almost any age period, it is most frequent following events that bring about major psychological changes in a person's life: graduation, childbirth, promotion, retirement, loss of a valued friend. It occurs more often after the age of thirty and is usually accompanied by a host of physical symptoms.[1]

"The major mechanisms of depression are repression and displacement."[2] The depressed person is frequently hypersensitive to frustration and displays a marked tendency towards feelings of hopelessness, pessimism, cynicism and futility. Many times to counteract these feelings they become "work addicts." Exhibiting a high degree of personal responsibility, many depressed executives have an extremely high set of standards which are, too often, unattainable by themselves or their subordinates. In addition, they frequently tend to be fairly inflexible.

Those executives that become pessimists usually expect the worst and plan accordingly. They sometimes become known as "negative thinkers." Many times the pessimist prefers to avoid decisions and he will "study the problem to death." This in turn can, and usually does, have multiple effects on the pessimist's subordinates and the organization as a whole.

3. Withdrawal Reactions. Often referred to as "pulling into one's shell" or "taking one's pack off," this effect of excessive tension

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[1]Ibid., p. 71.

[2]Ibid., p. 73.

is, as a rule, easily recognizable, especially in the advanced stages of
neurotic or psychotic behavior.

Aside from the more severe emotional aspects, one form of with-
drawal reaction to tension is considered to be a major and growing
problem among the executive ranks. Motivated by fear and uncertainty
caused by the much heralded management-technological advances, many exec-
utives use the defense mechanisms of denial or rationalization to cope
with their tensions. They become "executive dropouts." Lee S. Bickmore
stated in Duns Review that:

> The pressures and complexities of modern business have
> taken a very real toll . . . and created an ill that much
> of industry has not yet become aware of.
>
> In his own way the executive dropout is more burden-
> some to his company than the school dropout is to the
> educational system. He does not leave. For all intents
> and purposes he has taken early retirement, but he does
> not retire. . . . Yet he has ceased to function as a
> mover, innovator or contributor to the forward thrust of
> the company.[1]

This observation was reinforced by Bryant and Schoderbek in an article
in Personnel Administration.[2] They stated that the executive dropout
was "deadly" because he "infected" the organization thru his association
with new young executives. In addition, Dr. Robert Blake has found that
there is a surprisingly large number of dropouts, or "zombies" as he
calls them, among the ranks of top management.[3]

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[1]Lee S. Bickmore, "The Problem of Executive Dropout," Duns Review,
Vol. LXXXVII (April, 1966), p. 34.

[2]Bryant and Schoderbek, Duns Review, Vol. 31 (September-October,
1968), p. 47.

[3]"Grid Puts Executives on the Griddle," Business Week, Nr. 2094
(October 18, 1969), p. 160.

Generally speaking, the executive who has withdrawal reactions is a poor group member and an ineffective leader. He is also a poor teacher because he often will advance information only when directly asked, and many times he will project himself as a "know it all." He is extremely difficult to communicate with.

4. Hostility Reactions. These reactions to tension are the most visible to other people. The hostile person is an angry person -- he is a fighter. He is generally a difficult person to get along with. And, he frequently generates fear and/or anger in those that he comes in contact with, and thus, generates more tension within himself and within the organization. This executive is sometimes said to "manage by fear."

Levinson states:

> The major mechanism of hostility reactions is pro-
> jection. . . . Their hostility is unacceptable to their
> own superegos, so they repress it. But repressing the
> hostility only makes it unconscious; it does not dis-
> appear. Instead it presses the ego for expression.
> For some people, the only solution is to release the
> hostility, but what if this is forbidden by the superego?
> One way is to pacify the superego. It is justifiable for
> these people to be angry with someone else if that person
> is hostile to them. The solution is simple, expedient,
> and unconscious: Believe the other person to be hostile;
> then you can vent your hostility on him with no complaint
> from the superego.[1]

In addition to using the defense mechanism of projection, the hostile person frequently uses the mechanisms of rationalization and displacement. The world is seen to be a hostile place and there are many things towards which one's anger can be diverted.

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[1]Levinson, Emotional Health . . ., p. 106.

The executive can exhibit many various styles of hostility re-
actions. For example: (1) Some may appear to be somewhat passive, yet
they are "tigers" lying in ambush waiting for someone to violate their
trust. (2) Others are "perfectionists." Seemingly always angry, they
attack those who cannot meet their high expectations and they frequently
are reknown for giving caustic and sarcastic criticism. (3) Some be-
lieve that the best defense is a good offense. Since they perceive the
world to be a hostile environment, they firmly believe that they had
better get the other person before he can get him.

Thus, we see that the executive who adapts to tension by being
hostile is unable to completely trust others. He attempts to be "an
island unto himself." He may be indecisive but he can also be a de-
cisive egotist e.g., he may have extreme difficulty in recognizing the
fact that he is not infallible. (General MacArthur appeared to be this
type of person.) Hyper-alert to the threats of the hostile world, the
angry executive may be over attentive to detail and rigid in his thinking.
He has the need to control, to dominate to have power; he naturally gravi-
tates towards leadership positions, but, too often, he is unable to dele-
gate authority and unable to cope with change. This type of executive
is many times an asset in a young organization, but generally, as the
organization matures, he becomes more and more of a liability.

5. Immaturity Reactions. Levinson refers to these reactions as
"Those forms of behavior that reflect poor impulse control by the ego."[1]
In other words, when confronted with a stress situation, the individual,

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[1]Ibid., p. 126.

in this case, is seen to be one who has little self control, and one who
often has hedonistic tendencies.

In this respect, tension is viewed as being a major contributor
to a host of negative personality traits or behavioral expressions. Al-
coholism is considered to be the major problem in this area and will be
discussed shortly. However, prior to discussing alcoholism, a few of
the most common immaturity reactions will be mentioned. These require
little, if any, explanation and are the result of the use of many varied
defense mechanisms.

One very common reaction to tension is impulsiveness. For ex-
ample, the impulsive person is a poor listener. When involved in a dis-
cussion, he frequently cannot wait his turn to speak -- he is so intent
on what he has to say that he doesn't hear the other person, and he con-
tinually interrupts. He frequently is very verbose, and worse still, he
often makes decisions without knowing or understanding all the facts.

Some executives react to tension by becoming overly self-centered.
In their drive to get ahead they adopt many "phony" mannerisms and at-
titudes -- they become "politicians." Their insincerity, lack of in-
tegrity, disregard of subordinates, etc., often is not detected by their
superiors, but generally they do not fool the subordinates for long.

Other executives become passive aggressors. They resist change
by "thinking negatively" -- professing to have the best interests of the
organization in mind, they usually have at least five good reasons why a
proposed change will not work. Another way of being passively aggressive
is exhibited by the executive who "goes by the book" -- he uses a
minimum of initiative, refuses to recognize the spirit or the intent of

..., and in the fashion of the often caricactured bureaucrat, he never

...ates from "the letter of the law."

Needless to say, all of the above tension reactive behavior can

... a deleterious effect on the executive, those who come in contact

... him, and his organization as a whole. However, as previously

...ated, alcoholism is considered to be the major destructive effect

...hin this area.

Alcoholism is a major, yet hidden and rarely discussed, problem

...ong executives. Underscoring the magnitude of the problem Fortune re-

...orted that "alcoholism has been found to be more of a problem in the

executive suite than on skid row."[1] And Schoonmaker reports that "more

than three million workers and executives are alcoholics, making al-

...oholism America's fourth largest health problem (following heart disease,

...ental illness, and cancer)."[2]

It is recognized that there are other factors that contribute to

...coholism besides tension, such as social standards, e.g., subtle pres-

...res to have before and after dinner drinks or cultural ways, e.g., the

...ench people and wine. Nevertheless, despite all theories on the subject,

... is still generally accepted that the major cause of alcoholism is

...ychological, i.e., the alcoholic generally drinks to allay his tensions.

...tional Effects

When a person's stress control system, i.e., his defense mech-

...isms are not, for any reason whatsoever, adequate to allay his tension,

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[1] H. Maurer, "The Beginning of Wisdom About Alcoholism," Fortune, ..., 1968), p. 176.

[2] Schoonmaker, Anxiety. . ., p. 169. .

serious emotional consequences may occur. These emotional effects take the form of psychological disturbances or mental disorders, of which there are two main classes: (1) psychoneuroses or neuroses, and (2) psychoses.[1]

Neuroses. "Neurotic" is a word that "has been overused and misused in our psychologically oriented age."[2] The average person does not really understand the meaning of the word, but he will often use the word in a derogatory sense to describe people whom he doesn't like. Schoonmaker states that:

> Most neurotics are not easily recognizable as such; they are not crazy, disorganized, confused, paranoid or violent. They are similar to normal people, use the same sorts of defense mechanisms, and differ only in the amount that they use them and the effects their defenses have on themselves. . . . They are somewhat more anxious than other people, more dependent on their defenses, and less able to enjoy life. Some neuroses interfere with men's careers, but others actually help men to become successful executives.[3]

The following paragraphs will briefly describe four of the most common forms of neurotic reactions.[4]

1. Anxiety Reactions. Neurotics that experience these types of reactions are victims of general or "free floating" anxiety. They are in a practically constant state of tension that is characterized by generalized and persistent feelings of intense anxiety. In effect, they are always "up tight." "Some research suggests that this type of

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[1]Krech and Crutchfield, Elements of Psychology, p. 653.

[2]Schoonmaker, Anxiety. . . ., p. 147.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Krech and Crutchfield, Elements of Psychology, p. 654.

neurosis may be more common among executives than in the general pub-
lic. . . ."[1]

2. Phobic Reactions. This type of neurosis is the result of
non-objective anxiety. Phobias are irrational fears. They are focused
on external objects or conditions and are fears that are excessive and/or
groundless, i.e., the fears are not considered to be commensurate with
the threat imposed by the external objects or conditions.

Everyone has fears that are out of proportion to the real dan-
gers, and in these instances most people only suffer mild anxiety and
can live with their fears. The neurotic cannot. He lets the phobia(s)
dominate him. For example, consider the executive who refuses to fly or
who is literally unable to make a public speech.

3. Obsessive - Compulsive Reactions. Compulsions and obsessions
can occur independently, but they frequently go together. For example,
the "rocketing" young executive who is determined to reach the top and
who will do anything to achieve his goal, is probably an obsessive -
compulsive neurotic. His acts might not really be in the best overall
interests of his family and his organization, but his neurosis probably
will aid his career goals.

Obsessive thoughts are severe, often disturbing, and unavoidable.
They cannot be forgotten or ignored. Not to be confused with a common
mild obsession such as worrying about not having locked the house after
leaving on a long trip, the neurotic may worry all the time about such
things as profits, accidents, the stock market, sex, or the possibility
that his wife may become unfaithful.

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[1]Schoonmaker, Anxiety. . ., p. 149.

Compulsive neurotics have irresistable urges and behave in ir-
rational ways by doing strange, illogical or seemingly ridiculous things,
e.g., Captain Queeg of The Caine Mutiny and his "strawberry investi-
gation." Many times his compulsions cause him to act in a rigid, re-
petitive fashion. Many young executives have had superiors whose manner
of dress never varied, who was a fanatic in certain administrative areas
(e.g., typed correspondence must be perfect in all respects) or who was
known as a lecher because he could not resist "patting" the office girls.

4. Neurasthenic Reactions. The neurotic that has these re-
actions experiences physical feelings that are inconsistent in light of
the actual physical effort expended. He is chronically exhausted or
fatigued, listless and cannot concentrate. He is the hypochondriac who
is extremely concerned with his health. "It is notable that the fatigue
becomes most marked when the neurotic person is faced with an unpleasant
task or conflict situation, and may evaporate when he turns to pleasurable
pursuits."[1]

Psychoses. These are the severest kinds of mental illness. They
have been classified as organic, i.e., psychoses which are caused by
identifiable bodily diseases or defects; and functional, i.e., psychoses
that are caused by one's psychological problems. Of the two, functional
psychoses are, by far, the most predominant;[2] and it is to the three main
classes of functional psychoses that the following paragraphs will be di-
rected.

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[1]Krech and Crutchfield, Elements of Psychology, p. 654.

[2]John C. Whitehorn, "Psychosis," Encyclopedia Americana, Vol.
22 (1966), p. 744.

1. Manic-Depressive. People with this type of psychosis ex-
perience extreme fluctuations in emotional moods, e.g., ranging from ex-
treme elation to severe depression or violent rage. They can be dangerous
to themselves and to others, e.g., they are often capable of committing
suicide or murder. These moods are characterized by prolonged fixity
"with marked self-dispargement or self-assertiveness, persisting for
weeks or months but tending toward remission with full restoration of
capacity."[1]

2. Schizophrenia. This is the most prevalent of all psychoses.
Psychotics that experience this type of reaction exhibit a wide variety
of symptoms. In general, though, schizophrenics are "characterized by
strangely deranged thinking and self-absorbtion in hallucinatory and
delusional preoccupations, which tend to become chronic, with deteri-
oration of habits and social personality."[2] In other words, his behavior
alternates between the rational and irrational and it becomes more pro-
nounced and/or progressively worse. Hitler was a classic example of
this type of psychotic.

Schoonmaker states that psychotic symptoms are rare among the
executive ranks.[3] It is interesting to note, however, that in addition
to being the most prevalent of the psychoses, schizophrenia, among all
of man's illnesses, fills one-fourth of all existing hospital beds in the
United States![4]

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Schoonmaker, Anxiety. . ., p. 150.

[4]Whitehorn, Encyclopedia Americana, Vol. 22, p. 744.

3. Paranoia. A paranoid is one who suffers serious delusions
(false beliefs) about himself. He has psychologically organized these
delusions into a systematic and logical whole; and this tends to make
them highly resistant to attempts by others to disprove his delusions.
The most common of the delusions are "delusions of persecution" and "de-
lusions of grandeur" and further explanation of them is not considered
to be necessary.

This type of psychosis is particularly insidious for the af-
flicted man's family and organization because the paranoid, according
to Krech and Crutchfield:

> . . . is likely to show much less general behavioral deteri-
> oration than a person with other psychoses. He is often
> perfectly able to carry on his affairs successfully at home
> and in business and to avoid hospitalization. He may, of
> course, be succeeding at the expense of damage to his
> family and associates, and occasionally, in cases of ex-
> treme paranoia, he may resort to murderous action against
> his 'persecutors.'[1]

In summary, we see that there is a somewhat large degree of dif-
ference between the two major emotional effects of excessive tension.
The neurotic is not easily distinguishable from a "normal" person since
we all have some neurotic type characteristics. The dividing point be-
tween normality and neurotic behavior is one of degree and is difficult
to establish, especially for the layman.[2] The neurotic person, like the
normal person, is usually aware of himself, recognizes that some of his
behavior is abnormal, and can usually take care of himself. The neurotic
can benefit from some assistance but it is not usually a necessity. The

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[1] Krech and Crutchfield, Elements of Psychology, p. 655.

[2] Arkoff, Adjustment and Mental Health, p. 210.

psychotic, however, generally does not realize that his behavior is abnormal regardless of how bizarre it may be; he is not really responsible for his irrational behavior, and he definitely needs professional help.[1]

Now, having seen the possible high costs of the behavioral and emotional effects of excessive tension, let us turn and explore the physical costs.

Physical Effects

Poor physical health is not caused solely by excessive tension. There are many reasons for poor physical health. For example, many people are born with weak or defective organs; all of us are affected by viruses and contagious diseases; and many of us have acquired bad health habits, unrelated to tension, such as overeating, smoking, drinking, and failure to exercise properly. Tension, however, is a major contributing factor to a wide variety of physical ailments. It can kill and it is responsible for ruining the health of millions. This fact is well recognized by the medical profession. In one physician's opinion:

> Anxiety /meaning tension as defined herein/ is the most universal and disturbing symptom that confronts the practicing doctor of medicine. It is conservatively estimated that at least seventy-five per cent of the daily patient load is afflicted to some degree with anxiety.[2]

In the section on the symptoms of tension, Chapter III, it was indicated that the body has certain systems that are alerted when a person perceives a stress situation and that the body's organs or systems

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[1]Schoonmaker, Anxiety. . ., p. 150.

[2]Nathan K. Rickles, Management of Anxiety for the General Practitioner (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1963), p. viii.

undergo many changes. The autonomic nervous system was said to be the primary producer of the bodily manifestations of tension and when aroused, it affected the activities of the heart, blood vessels, respiratory muscles and secretory glands. It was further inferred, that when the tension state experienced by the individual was of sufficient intensity and duration, that certain additional changes or physical disorders could result if the body remained in an almost constant state of mobilization.

As was indicated in Chapter III, these bodily stress responses can be categorized as reactions of the cardiovascular, gastrointestinal and respiratory systems and as skin reactions. Therefore, it is within this categorical framework that the following paragraphs will describe the physical or physiological effects of excessive tension.

1. Cardiovascular Reactions. The heart and its system of blood vessels are probably the most sensitive indicator of emotional stimuli. Today, cardiovascular disease continues to be the number one killer in the United States -- responsible for fifty-four per cent of deaths.[1] "Weiss and English (1957) are quoted as saying: 'In spite of the enormous incidence of cardiovascular disease, the majority of patients who have symptoms referred to the heart region do not have evidence of organic heart disease.'[2] ". . . The evidence clearly suggests that anxiety is a major cause of heart attacks and other cardiovascular diseases."[3]

Other cardiovascular disorders that can be caused by excessive tension are strokes, migraine headaches, hypertension and the phenomenon

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[1]Washington Post (Parade Section), March 15, 1970, p. 5.

[2]Arkoff, Adjustment and Mental Health, p. 123.

[3]Schoonmaker, Anxiety. . ., p. 187.

of the palpitating heart. And, although it has been actuarially proven that the executive is no more prone to suffer from heart attacks and other cardiovascular disorders than other occupational types, this does not lessen the seriousness of these effects of excessive tension. The incidence of heart disorders among executives is still significant, especially since much executive tension, and therefore its effects, is controllable and/or unnecessary.

2. Gastrointestinal Reactions. The gastrointestinal or digestive system is the second most sensitive bodily system in terms of responsiveness to tension states. Arkoff states:

> In summing up the evidence presented by a number of investigators, Weiss and English (1957) concluded that 'emotional factors are the chief cause of gastrointestinal complaints.' In two-thirds of the cases gastrointestinal symptoms are partly or fully psychological in origin.[1]

Tension can cause one to overeat or undereat and both of these habits can cause a host of physical disorders. The most common gastrointestinal disorder is the peptic ulcer, which is caused by the excessive secretion of stomach acids that attack the stomach lining and cause very painful inflammation and irritation. Other gastrointestinal disorders that can be caused by excessive tension are chronic gastritis, colitis (inflammation of the colon or large intestine), diarrhea, and constipation.

3. Respiratory Reactions. The respiratory system is very sensitive to emotional states. When threatened, frustrated or faced with conflict, we tend to breathe more rapidly, it is difficult to swallow

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[1] Arkoff, Adjustment and Mental Health, pp. 123-124.

and the tonal quality of the voice changes. Persistent coughing, hic-coughs, and clearing of the throat is intensified, if not actually caused in some cases by tension. Asthma and allergies too are sometimes attributed to or intensified by tension.[1]

In addition, because tension wears out the body, directly, or indirectly through the causation of bad health habits, it can play a significant role in the onset, development, treatment and recovery of such "resistance" type diseases as tuberculosis and the common cold.

4. Skin Reactions. Beyond the initial skin reactions to tension states such as turning pale, flushing or getting "goose bumps," tension has been found to be an important contributor to a variety of skin dis-orders. Research has indicated that such annoying and unsightly disorders as acne, eczema, psoriasis, warts and hives can be tension reactions. Schoonmaker states that there is even some evidence that excessive tension can cause baldness.[2]

It was mentioned at the beginning of this section that poor physi-cal health can result from bad health habits that are not related to tension. It is also certain that tension causes many people to acquire bad health habits. In both cases, the acquisition of bad health habits can induce additional tension, and they all can have destructive physi-cal effects on the body. To illustrate, the following health habits were found to exist among those executives who complained of excessive tension (13 per cent of 6,000) during the Life Extension Foundation's 1959 study of executive tension:

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[1]Ibid., p. 125.

[2]Schoonmaker, Anxiety. . . ., p. 190.

When they eat:
    They eat breakfast on the fly. (Under five minutes).
    They bolt their lunch. (Under fifteen minutes).
    They hurry through their dinner. (Under thirty
        minutes), and a high percentage are on diets
        nursing gastric disorders.

In their recreation:
    Few of those complaining of tension get some form
        of regular exercise.
    Few have extra-curricular interests (church,
        civic, etc.).
    Many have no hobby at all.
    One out of five gets no recreation whatsoever.

For their rest:
    Many average six or fewer hours of sleep at night.
    Few have weekends free for family and self.
    Their vacation time is twenty per cent less
        than the overall average.

In their smoking and drinking:
    Most are heavy cigarette smokers.
    Most have cocktails for lunch, and many drink
        more than two.
    Many have more than two cocktails before dinner.

In the drugs they take:
    Most of them use sleep-inducing sedatives.
    Most of them quiet their nerves with tranqui-
        lizers.[1]

Although the coverage of the effects of excessive tension on the executive has been, for the most part, broad in scope, it should be evident that tension is a problem of the first magnitude. It has been shown that excessive tension can effect our mind, our body and our behavior. It is a major determinant of our personality.

It has been shown that excessive tension has a negative effect on a person and that it can seriously affect an executive and his management style, especially his decision-making or problem-solving processes.

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[1] Life Extension Foundation, Report of a Survey on Executive Tension in Business, p. 18.

Therefore, it is evident, from both the social and economic viewpoint, that excessive tension must be minimized and controlled; and it is to this problem that the final chapter will be devoted.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

People live in corporations. There is a signifi-
cance in this statement that may not be immediately
apparent. People do not turn a switch and shut them-
selves off during the time they work. Although some
of them try to. They experience. They think. They
feel -- excitement, anxiety, pleasure, annoyance, bore-
dom, lethargy. They face challenges -- physical, in-
tellectual and emotional. They struggle, adapt, or
surrender. What they think, how they feel, and how
they act are largely determined by two things -- their
own natures and the environment within which they
operate. . . . -- Herman[1]

As stated in the opening chapter, this paper examines the growing

problem of excessive tension in the executive ranks. It was observed

that the large organization is the dominant institution of our times and

that the way our institutions are managed reflects what our society will

become.

It was also suggested that the atmosphere of the executive hier-

archy of an organization affects and/or determines, to a large extent,

the overall organizational climate and subsequently the level of organi-

zational effectiveness. And, based on the premise that tension control

by executives is a prime determinant of the organizational climate and

effectiveness, the approach of this paper has been to focus on the facts

and effects of unhealthy executive tension and to illuminate its pivotal

impact upon managerial effectiveness.

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[1]Stanley M. Herman, The People Specialists (New York: Alfred A.
Knopf, Inc., 1968), p. 4.

To emphasize the universality of tension and to make the reader aware of the full dimensions of the problem of tension, the nature of tension was described in some detail in Chapter III. Simply stated, tension is a by-product of stress, but it was shown that this definition belies the enormous complexity of the tension phenomena. The stress/tension cycle is not a simple cause and effect relationship. Stressors and tension are many times interrelated with tension, or the effects of tension, and become a cause for even greater tension. Thus, the stress/tension cycle is seen to be not only a complex one, but also a frequently circular process.

The executive has been depicted as the "man in the middle" -- subject not only to the hazards of personality maladjustments, but to the equally, and perhaps more stressful strains of his demanding job, family and societal affiliations. To underscore this portrayal, the natures of the executive and of the large organization were contrasted in terms of their general characteristics as components of the social system. And, it is shown that there are many potential and actual areas of conflict.

For the sake of clarity and consistency, Chapter V described the common "real life" causes (stressors) of unhealthy executive tension as situations that are easily related to specific sub-systems of the social system, i.e., individual and organizational stressors, family stressors, and societal stressors. Many stressors were identified and it is believed to be apparent that, while many of these sources of tension are not avoidable, their intensity or frequency can be minimized. In

addition, it is believed that there are also many stressors that are com-
pletely avoidable or unnecessary.

Chapter VI described the major behavioral, emotional and physical
effects of excessive tension on the executive and thus indicated how this
tension could adversely affect the organization. The fact that each in-
dividual has a unique tension control system and tension tolerance was
also reiterated and it was suggested that tension, as a constructive
force, does have a point of diminishing returns, which is implicit in
Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome Theory.

It has been pointed out that many executives do not even know
when they are suffering from excessive tension. In addition, even if top
management is aware of the problem of executive tension, it is evident
that most organizations "operate with a laissez-faire attitude toward
the management and control of stress."[1] Thus, it is clear, in view of
the wide range of adverse effects that unhealthy executive tension can
have on all elements of the social system, that the individual executive
and the organization, i.e., top management, must make a concerted and
simultaneous effort to control tension. But how?

There is no easy, pat answer to this important question. But,
there are solutions; and in concluding this paper, one approach to
solving the problem will be offered. Bearing in mind that any solution
to the problem will require a concurrent effort by both the executives
and the organization, a possible solution for the executive will be des-
cribed first.

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[1]Slesinger and Harburg, The Management of Executive Stress in a
Complex Organization, pp. 6-7.

At the beginning of this paper a premise was made that success-
ful management requires the ability to positively affect and/or to shape
human behavior. It was also stated that, logically, this ability can be
viewed as being largely dependent upon each executive's degree of success
in confronting and coping with his personal problems of unhealthy
tension. Thus, not only should the executive have a humanistic manage-
ment philosophy, he must first get to really know himself, for this is
the only way he can hope to effectively control tension. Schoonmaker
calls this "enlightened individualism."[1]

In this era of the bureaucracies, all individuals, especially
the executive, should realize that they cannot change society or their
organization, but they should also realize that they can change them-
selves.

> You must accept these pressures as a fact of life,
> realize that you cannot change the world, and look for
> your own solution to the problem of anxiety. To do this
> you must free yourself from your inner prison, from your
> fears and defenses that undermine your independence. As
> you free yourself, social and organizational pressures
> become less important. They are still powerful, but they
> don't mean as much. As you become free of your inner
> prison you expand the walls of the outer one; you under-
> stand the pressures and their impact on you and can re-
> sist them or choose the place where the pressures are
> not so irratating. You can find meaningful work, build
> real bonds with the world, and control your own life.[2]

Just as an addict must really desire to cure himself, the exec-
utives, especially those in top management, must want to learn to control
tension. And, if they really desire to do this, they must recognize that
it will be a long arduous process -- it will require a great deal of

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[1]Schoonmaker, Anxiety. . ., p. 215.

[2]Ibid., p. 216.

self-education and self-analysis -- the price will be high, but the
benefits should far exceed the costs. The process, will of itself, be a
stressor since it will take away one's illusions about himself and the
world, and it will probably weaken one's defenses. Ultimately, however,
the executive can broaden his base of perception and therefore cope much
more effectively with his environment.

Actually, the process of self-analysis encompasses, at least,
three areas -- self-education, improvement of personal relations, and
career planning and/or career evaluation.[1]

If the executive is really serious about coping with tension and
in educating himself towards that end, he will treat it as a serious
responsibility and establish a specific educational plan or curriculum.
He must set aside certain periods of time in which to read and reflect.
His reading should be balanced and selective, covering not only material
in the human behavioral field such as individual psychology, small group
theory and theories of organization, but also in other disciplines such
as economics, social theory, political science and other fields as
deemed applicable. He should also find the time to have open discussions
about serious current issues with his friends, or perhaps as a member of
a community discussion group.

In addition to being part of the process of self-analysis, de-
veloping satisfying personal relationships is, of itself, an educational
process. It usually requires the individual to change some of his at-
titudes and habits and it also involves some real risks. In this

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[1]Ibid., pp. 216-249.

respect, a person generally needs some outside assistance.   As Clovis

Shepard states:

> One of the major difficulties with self-evaluation is
> that a person by himself finds it difficult to distinguish
> between what he thinks himself to be and what he mani-
> fests to others. . . .
> . . . .
> Thus, self-evaluation can carry him only so far, and then
> he must rely on diagnosis.[1]

Thus, aside from seeking assistance from a close friend or a professional

counsellor, the executive could get to know himself better and also im-

prove his personal relationships by taking part in some form of small

group/sensitivity training.

To round out the process of self-analysis, the executive must

also do some serious career planning and/or career evaluation. The

labor market is probably the most imperfect of all markets and too often,

even the executive allows the "system" to plan his career. Schoonmaker

suggests that there are eight major steps involved in career planning/

evaluation. In brief, some of the more important of these are:[2]

1. Analyze your own goals. You might find that you are in the
   wrong organization; that you are striving towards goals set
   by someone else; or that material success has been ac-
   corded too high a priority.

2. Determine your assets and liabilities. This is extremely
   difficult to do, will be general at best, but will greatly
   aid in assessing the reasonableness of your ambitions.

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[1]Shepard, Small Groups. . ., pp. 108-109.

[2]Schoonmaker, Anxiety. . ., pp. 239-249.

3. Analyze your opportunities. In other words, what are your chances of attaining your goals? Will your family life have to suffer? Is the industry growing or dying? Is the promotion policy stable or arbitrary? Should you look for a new job or ask for a transfer within the company?

4. Learn the rules of company politics. Realistically the only way one can avoid politics is to leave the executive ranks.

5. Learn and use bargaining tactics. This is part of learning the politics, but is considered to be important enough for separate mention. "Bargaining is based not on morality but on power, and power depends on the number of options available. . . ."[1] The executive actually does have many options open to him in bargaining for pay, promotions, duties and transfers and an excellent guide in this area is Albert Carr's book, Business as a Game.[2]

6. Plan your career. Decide where you want to be at the height of your career and determine the steps that lead to it. By having some intelligent overall plan, you retain a good deal of control over your life and this alone will aid in controlling your tension.

7. Make periodic evaluations of career progress. Since change is an inevitable force in our culture, it is reasonable to

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[1]Ibid., p. 245.

[2]Albert Z. Carr, Business as a Game, (New York: New American Library Inc., 1968).

expect your goals to change in some degree. Therefore, after analyzing the "feedback," your career plan must be changed accordingly.

Admittedly, the plan advanced above as a means for the individual executive to control tension remains a framework. Nevertheless, it is felt to emphasize a sense of self-determination and thus, to constitute a sound program. If followed, it is one that should prove equal to the task.

If the top executives of the organizations believe in and undertake a serious tension control program, then the organization, too, can aid in reducing the destructive effects of unhealthy tension. The individual executive cannot, by himself, change the organization, but a group of executives, i.e., top management, can do much to change the organization. And, organizational change, i.e., a renewal, is common by the effort required for the organization to purify its climate and maintain a healthy psychological climate that minimizes stress situations.

It would be impossible, within the scope of this paper, to adequately describe in detail a plan for changing today's large organizations. The problem is, of itself, a major research task. However, comprehensive outlines already exist in the literature on this subject.

For instance, in Organizational Renewal, Dr. Gordon L. Lippitt states that organizational renewal should strive for the following results:

1. Continuous examination of the growth of organization, together with diagnosis of the multiple internal and external influences affecting its state of being.

2. Improvements in the manner in which problems are solved at all levels of the organization.

3. Development within the organization of formal and informal groups which are effective and communicative.

4. Development of leadership which is appropriate to the situation facing the organization at any given time.

5. A way for people within the organization to learn from their experiences of success or failure.

6. Maturity of individuals and groups within the organization as well as maturity of the organization itself.

7. Development of a climate that encourages and channels creativity by people throughout the organization.

8. Development of a system to which all employees of the organization feel committed, thereby securing their motivation.[1]

Thus, the organization, like the individual executive, must undergo a _long_ serious self-analysis. The process will cause tension for some of the organization too, but since change is also a healthful stressor, the long-run benefits should exceed, by far, the short-term costs.

Sensitivity training was suggested as means of aiding the individual executive in his self-analysis process. It is also considered to be an excellent vehicle for assisting an organization in its self-analysis. And, the best approach probably, would be for the organization to engage the services of a management consultant type firm that specializes in such problems.

One such firm, recently reported on by _Business Week_,[2] is Scientific Methods, Incorporated. Founded by psychologists Robert R.

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[1]Lippitt, _Organizational Renewal_, p. 6.

[2]"Grid Puts Executives on the Griddle," _Business Week_, Nr. 2094 (October 18, 1969), p. 160.

Blake and Jane S. Mouton, this firm, according to its 1970 course bro-

chures:

> . . . specializes in the application of behavioral
> science principles to increase corporate excellence
> through Grid Organization Development. The company
> aids organizations in gaining insight into their
> corporate cultures and managerial practices and in
> designing action methods for improved performance.
> Clients become better prepared and more deeply com-
> mitted to solving the human and operational problems
> that constitute barriers to corporate excellence.
>
> The company's staff members are available on an
> individual basis to assist clients in diagnosing those
> organizational health problems that are barriers to
> corporate excellence.
>
> Research and development work, both basic and ap-
> plied, is another major activity.

Thus, the use of sensitivity training methods could provide lasting

benefits, in addition to assisting the organization in the self-analysis

required for renewal. It could be used for periodic organizational re-

evaluation and improvement of individual managerial insight and tech-

niques. More importantly perhaps, it could be used as the means whereby

the organization could periodically measure or approximate the presence,

sources and intensity of unhealthy tension -- not only in the executive

hierarchy, but throughout the entire organization.

Critics may argue, especially those of the theory X school of

management, that the case against excessive tension is over exaggerated.

"Life has always been that way" they will say. They are also likely to

say that if an executive "can't stand the heat, he should get out of the

kitchen." In addition, it will probably be concluded that this is just

another paper written by an unrealistic human behavioralist advocate who

fails to understand the economic realities of life.

While this study is certainly not immune to criticism, it is felt that criticisms such as those above would not, of themselves, be entirely valid or realistic. It has been shown that tension is, in one sense, a function of change and that today's rate of change has reached unparalleled proportions. Thus, life, considered in relation to change and its myriad of effects, has not always been this way.

Many executives, and non-executives too, are "getting out of the kitchen," involuntarily in most cases, because of tension. Although exact statistics are not readily available, the magnitude of the problem of unhealthy executive tension is not terribly hard to interpolate. The National Institute for Health reminds us in its frequent T. V. commercials that one-half of all hospital beds are occupied by mental patients; and, as pointed out in Chapter VI, schizophrenia, which is primarily a stress/tension illness, accounts for one-fourth of all hospital beds. In addition, Chapter VI also reported that cardiovascular disease, which is also primarily a stress/tension illness, is the number one killer in the United States being responsible for 54 per cent of all deaths. Thus, since it has been shown that the executive is only slightly better off actuarially than the non-executive, it seems reasonable to assume that tension is driving entirely too many executives "out of the kitchen."

And, what of those executives/leaders who "stay in the kitchen?" Many of them appear to be exhibiting some of the effects of unhealthy tension. The daily news constantly reminds us that many of our leaders/executives have become rigid or non-responsive to the changing social-economic-technical scene. The past few Congresses, and the present one, have been labeled "do nothing bodies" and, in the administrative field

alone, they have been critized as being unbelievably inefficient. There
is despair over vacillating national policies or lack of policies and,
especially over an apparent national disregard for integrity. The De-
partment of Defense, the State Department, ad infinitum, have been found
to be seriously lacking in many managerial areas.

In the introduction, Professor Claude S. George, Jr. was quoted
as saying:

> Management is at one and the same time the determinor
> of our economic progress, the employer of our educated,
> the amasser of our resources, the guide for our effective
> government, the strength of our national defense, and the
> molder of our society. It is the central core of our
> national as well as personal activities, and the way we
> manage ourselves and our institutions reflects with
> alarming clarity what we and our society will become.[1]

Tension is ubiquitous, contagious, healthy and unhealthy. Un-
healthy tension can and does have destructive and wide-reaching effects.
It clouds man's mind and probably, most significantly, it affects his
judgement and performance. Thus, being fully aware of the realities of
life, economic and otherwise, unhealthy executive tension is thought to
present "a clear and present danger" to the executive, to our society,
and ultimately, to the world!

It is not entirely unthinkable, if the executive and the organi-
zation can both learn to manage tension, that this nation, indeed the
world, might become a better place to live.

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[1]George, The History of Management Thought, p. 1.

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